KAYE'S AND MALLESON'S HISTORY

OF THE

INDIAN MUTINY

OF

1857-8.

EDITED BY COLONEL MALLESON, C.S.I.

VOL. I.

BY SIR JOHN KAYE, K.C.S.I., F.R.S.

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I SHOULD HAVE DEDICATED

THESE VOLUMES

TO

LORD CANNING,

HAD HE LIVED;

I NOW INSCRIBE THEM REVERENTIALLY

TO HIS MEMORY.

. . . For to think that an handful of people can, with the greatest courage and policy in the world, embrace too large extent of dominion, it may hold for a time, but it will fail suddenly.—*Bacon.*

. . . As for mercenary forces (which is the help in this case), all examples show that, whatsoever estate, or prince, doth rest upon them, he may spread his feathers for a time, but he will mew them soon after.—*Bacon.*

If there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire. The matter of seditions is of two kinds, much poverty and much discontentment. It is certain, so many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles. . . . The causes and motives for sedition are, innovations in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers, deaths, disbanded soldiers, factions grown desperate; and whatsoever in offending people joineth and knitteth them in a common cause.—*Bacon.*

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

In preparing a new, and, if I may so call it, a consolidated edition of the History of the Indian Mutiny—that is, an editioı in which Colonel Malleson's three volumes of continuation ar blended with the two initiatory volumes of Sir John Kaye— I have had to encounter few difficulties beyond those of form By difficulties of form I mean differences of arrangement, an differences in the spelling of Indian proper names. It seeme to me absolutely essential that in both these respects the tw works should be brought into complete accord. I have, there fore, met the first difficulty by substituting, in Sir John Kaye' volumes, an initial "Table of Contents" for the chapter head ings. Such a table, apart from other considerations, is moı useful to a reader who may desire to refer to a particula incident. With respect to the other difference it was impossib to hesitate. The spelling of the past, based upon the impre sions made upon men, ignorant of the Native languages, by tl utterances of the Natives, a spelling based upon no system, ar therefore absolutely fortuitous, has in these latter days give place to a spelling founded upon the actual letters which repr sent the places indicated. In its General Orders and in i Gazettes the Government of India of the present day adop the enlightened system of spelling drawn up by Dr. Hunte and this system has been adopted generally by the Indi Press, and by residents in India. Between the alternative adhering to a barbarous system, fast dying if not already dea and the more enlightened system of the present and of t future, there could not be a moment's hesitation. I ha adapted, then, Sir John Kaye's spelling of Indian proper nam to one more in accordance with modern usage, and in eve respect more correct. In the text, I need scarcely say, I ha not changed even a comma. That text remains, in the volumes, as he wrote and published it. Some of the indic

the interest in which has waned, if not altogether died out, have been omitted; some have been abridged; and in one instance the salient part has been transferred to the note to which it properly belonged. Colonel Malleson's three volumes have naturally met with far less indulgence at my hands. When these shall be published the reader will find that the severest critic of a work may be its author.

The work, when completed, will consist of Sir John Kaye's first and second volumes and of Colonel Malleson's three. These, with the index, will make six volumes. It is needless to discuss all the reasons why Colonel Malleson's first volume has been preferred to Sir John Kaye's third, for one will suffice. Kaye's third volume would not fit in with Malleson's second volume, as it concludes with the story of the storming of Dehli, which forms the first chapter of Malleson's second volume, whilst it omits the relief of Lakhnao, the account of which concludes Malleson's first volume.

I may add that on the few occasions on which I have deemed it absolutely necessary to append a note, that note bears the initials of the Editor.

G. B. M.

1*st October*, 1888.

PREFACE

By Sir JOHN KAYE.

It was not without much hesitation that I undertook to write this narrative of the events, which have imparted so painful a celebrity to the years 1857–58, and left behind them such terrible remembrances. Publicly and privately I had been frequently urged to do so, before I could consent to take upon myself a responsibility, which could not sit lightly on any one capable of appreciating the magnitude of the events themselves and of the many grave questions which they suggested. If, indeed, it had not been that, in course of time, I found, either actually in my hands or within my reach, materials of history such as it was at least improbable that any other writer could obtain, I should not have ventured upon so difficult a task. But having many important collections of papers in my possession, and having received promises of further assistance from surviving actors in the scenes to be described, I felt that, though many might write a better history of the Sipáhi War, no one could write a more truthful one.

So, relying on these external advantages to compensate all inherent deficiencies, I commenced what I knew must be a labour of years, but what I felt would be also a labour of love. My materials were too ample to be otherwise than most sparingly displayed. The prodigal citation of authorities has its advantages; but it encumbers the text, it impedes the narrative, and swells to inordinate dimensions the record of historical events. On a former occasion, when I laid before the public an account of a series of important transactions, mainly derived from original documents, public and private, I quoted those documents freely both in the text and in the notes. As I was at that time wholly unknown to the public, it was necessary that I should cite chapter and verse to obtain credence for my statements. There was no ostensible reason

why I should have known more about those transactions than any other writer (for it was merely the accident of private friendships and associations that placed such profuse materials in my possession), and it seemed to be imperative upon me therefore to produce my credentials. But, believing that this necessity no longer exists, I have in the present work abstained from adducing my authorities, for the mere purpose of substantiating my statements. I have quoted the voluminous correspondence in my possession only where there is some dramatic force and propriety in the words cited, or when they appear calculated, without impeding the narrative, to give colour and vitality to the story.

And here I may observe that, as on former occasions, the historical materials which I have moulded into this narrative are rather of a private than of a public character. I have made but little use of recorded official documents. I do not mean that access to such documents has not been extremely serviceable to me; but that it has rather afforded the means of verifying or correcting statements received from other sources than it has supplied me with original materials. So far as respects the accumulation of facts, this History would have differed but slightly from what it is, if I had never passed the door of a public office; and, generally, the same may be said of the opinions which I have expressed. Those opinions, whether sound or unsound, are entirely my own personal opinions—opinions in many instances formed long ago, and confirmed by later events and more mature consideration. No one but myself is responsible for them; no one else is in any way identified with them. In the wide range of inquiry embraced by the consideration of the manifold causes of the great convulsion of 1857, almost every grave question of Indian government and administration presses forward, with more or less importunity, for notice. Where, on many points, opinions widely differ, and the policy, which is the practical expression of them, takes various shapes, it is a necessity that the writer of cotemporary history, in the exercise of independent thought, should find himself dissenting from the doctrines and disapproving the actions of some authorities, living and dead, who are worthy of all admiration and respect. It is fortunate, when, as in the present instance, this difference of opinion involves no diminution of esteem, and the historian can discern worthy motives, and benevolent designs, and generous strivings after good, in those

whose ways he may think erroneous, and whose course of action he may deem unwise.

Indeed, the errors of which I have freely spoken were, for the most part, strivings after good. It was in the over-eager pursuit of Humanity and Civilisation that Indian statesmen of the new school were betrayed into the excesses which have been so grievously visited upon the nation. The story of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is, perhaps, the most signal illustration of our great national character ever yet recorded in the annals of our country. It was the vehement self-assertion of the Englishman that produced this conflagration; it was the same vehement self-assertion that enabled him, by God's blessing, to trample it out. It was a noble egotism, mighty alike in doing and in suffering, and it showed itself grandly capable of steadfastly confronting the dangers which it had brought down upon itself. If I have any predominant theory it is this: Because we were too English the great crisis arose; but it was only because we were English that, when it arose, it did not utterly overwhelm us.

It is my endeavour, also, to show how much both of the dangers which threatened British dominion in the East, and of the success with which they were encountered, is assignable to the individual characters of a few eminent men. With this object I have sought to bring the reader face to face with the principal actors in the events of the Sipáhi War, and to take a personal interest in them. If it be true that the best history is that which most nearly resembles a bundle of biographies, it is especially true when said with reference to Indian history; for nowhere do the characters of individual Englishmen impress themselves with a more vital reality upon the annals of the country in which they live; nowhere are there such great opportunities of independent action; nowhere are developed such capacities for evil or for good, as in our great Anglo-Indian Empire. If, then, in such a work as this, the biographical element were not prominently represented—if the individualities of such men as Dalhousie and Canning, as Henry and John Lawrence, as James Outram, as John Nicholson, and Herbert Edwardes, were not duly illustrated, there would be not only a cold and colourless, but also an unfaithful, picture of the origin and progress of the War. But it is to be remarked that, in proportion as the individuality of the English leaders is distinct and strongly marked, that of the chiefs of the insurrec-

tionary movement is faint and undecided. In the fact of this contrast we see the whole history of the success which, by God's providence, crowned the efforts of our countrymen. If the individual energies of the leaders of the revolt had been commensurate with the power of the masses, we might have failed to extinguish such a conflagration. But the whole tendency of the English system had been to crush out those energies; so again, I say, we found in the very circumstances which had excited the rebellion the very elements of our success in suppressing it. Over the Indian Dead Level which that system had created, the English heroes marched triumphantly to victory.

In conclusion, I have only to express my obligations to those who have enabled me to write this History by supplying me with the materials of which it is composed. To the executors of the late Lord Canning, who placed in my hands the private and demi-official correspondence of the deceased statesman, extending over the whole term of his Indian administration, I am especially indebted. To Sir John Lawrence and Sir Herbert Edwardes, who have furnished me with the most valuable materials for my narrative of the rising in the Panjáb and the measures taken in that province for the re-capture of Dehli; to the family of the late Colonel Baird Smith, for many interesting papers illustrative of the operations of the great siege; to Sir James Outram, who gave me before his death his correspondence relating to the brilliant operations in Oudh; to Sir Robert Hamilton, for much valuable matter in elucidation of the history of the Central Indian Campaign; and to Mr. E. A. Reade, whose comprehensive knowledge of the progress of events in the North-Western Provinces has been of material service to me, my warmest acknowledgments are due. But to no one am I more indebted than to Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, who has permitted me to consult the official records of his Department—a privilege which has ennabled me to make much better use of the more private materials in my possession. No one, however, can know better or feel more strongly than myself, that much matter of interest contained in the multitudinous papers before me is unrepresented in my narrative. But such omissions are the necessities of a history so full of incident as this. If I had yielded to the temptation to use my illustrative materials more freely, I should have expanded this work beyond all acceptable limits.

LONDON, *October*, 1864.

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HISTORY OF THE INDIAN MUTINY.



BOOK I.—INTRODUCTORY.

[1846—1856.]



CHAPTER I.

BROKEN in bodily health, but not enfeebled in spirit, by eight years of anxious toil beneath an Indian sun, Lord Dalhousie laid down the reins of government and returned to his native country to die. Since the reign of Lord Wellesley, so great in written history, so momentous in practical results, there had been no such administration as that of Lord Dalhousie; there had been no period in the annals of the Anglo-Indian Empire surcharged with such great political events, none which nearly approached it in the rapidity of its administrative progress. Peace and War had yielded their fruits with equal profusion.

On the eve of resigning his high trust to the hands of another, Lord Dalhousie drew up an elaborate state-paper reviewing the eventful years of his government. He had reason to rejoice in the retrospect; for he had acted in accordance with the faith that was within him, honestly and earnestly working out his cherished principles, and there was a bright flush of success over all the apparent result. Peace and prosperity smiled upon the empire. That empire he had vastly extended, and by its extension he believed that he had consolidated our rule and imparted additional security to our tenure of the country.

Of these great successes some account should be given at the outset of such a narrative as this: for it is only by understanding and appreciating them that we can rightly estimate the subsequent crisis. It was in the Panjáb and in Oudh that many of the most important incidents of that crisis occurred.

Lord Dalhousie found them Foreign States; he left them British Provinces.

First occupation of the Panjáb.

Lord Hardinge conquered the Sikhs; but he spared the Panjáb. Moderate in victory as resolute in war, he left the empire of Ranjit Singh, shorn only of its outlying provinces, to be governed by his successors, and strove to protect the boy-prince against the lawlessness of his own soldiers. But it was felt that this forbearance was only an experimental forbearance; and the proclamation which announced the restoration of the Panjáb to the Maharajah Dhulip Singh sounded also a note of warning to the great military autocracy which had well-nigh overthrown the State. "If this opportunity," said the victor, "of rescuing the Sikh nation from military anarchy and misrule be neglected, and hostile opposition to the British army be renewed, the Government of India will make such other arrangements for the future government of the Panjáb as the interests and security of the British power may render just and expedient." Thus was the doubt expressed; thus were the consequences foreshadowed. It did not seem likely that the experiment would succeed; but it was not less right to make it. It left the future destiny of the empire, under Providence, for the Sikhs themselves to determine. It taught them how to preserve their national independence, and left them to work out the problem with their own hands.

But Hardinge did more than this. He did not interfere with the internal administration, but he established a powerful military protectorate in the Panjáb. He left the Durbar to govern the country after its own fashion, but he protected the Government against the lawless domination of its soldiery. The Sikh army was overawed by the presence of the British battalions; and if the hour had produced the man—if there had been any wisdom, any love of country, in the councils of the nation—the Sikh Empire might have survived the great peril of the British military protectorate. But there was no one worthy to rule; no one able to govern. The mother of the young Maharajah was nominally the Regent. There have been great queens in the East as in the West—women who have done for their people what men have been incapable of doing. But the mother of Dhulip Singh was not one of these. To say that she loved herself better than her country is to use in courtesy the mildest words, which do not actually violate truth. She was,

indeed, an evil presence in the nation. It rested with her to choose a minister, and the choice which she made was another great suicidal blow struck at the life of the Sikh Empire. It may have been difficult in this emergency to select the right man, for, in truth, there were not many wise men from whom a selection could be made. The Queen-Mother cut through the difficulty by selecting her paramour.

Lál Singh was unpopular with the Durbar; unpopular with the people; and he failed. He might have been an able and an honest man, and yet have been found wanting in such a conjuncture. But he was probably the worst man in the Panjáb on whom the duty of reconstructing a strong Sikh Government could have devolved. To do him justice, there were great difficulties in his way. He had to replenish an exhausted treasury by a course of unpopular retrenchments. Troops were to be disbanded and Jaghirs resumed. Lál Singh was not the man to do this, as one bowing to a painful necessity, and sacrificing himself to the exigencies of the State. Even in a country where political virtue was but little understood, a course of duty consistently pursued for the benefit of the nation might have ensured for him some sort of respect. But whilst he was impoverishing others, he was enriching himself. It was not the public treasury, but the private purse, that he sought to replenish, and better men were despoiled to satisfy the greed of his hungry relatives and friends. Vicious among the vicious, he lived but for the indulgence of his own appetites, and ruled but for his own aggrandisement. The favourite of the Queen, he was the oppressor of the People. And though he tried to dazzle his British guests by rare displays of courtesy towards them, and made himself immensely popular among all ranks of the Army of Occupation by his incessant efforts to gratify them, he could not hide the one great patent fact, that a strong Sikh Government could never be established under the wazírat of Lál Singh.

But the British were not reponsible for the failure. The Regent chose him; and, bound by treaty not to exercise any interference in the internal administration of the Lahor State, the British Government had only passively to ratify the choice. But it was a state of things burdened with evils of the most obtrusive kind. We were upholding an unprincipled ruler and an unprincipled minister at the point of our British bayonets, and thus aiding them to commit iniquities which, without such

external support, they would not have long been suffered to perpetrate. The compact, however, was but for the current year; and even for that brief period there seemed but little probability of Lál Singh tiding over the difficulties and dangers which beset his position.

Very soon his treachery undid him. False to his own country, he was false also to the British Government. The province of Kashmir, which was one of the outlying dependencies taken by the British in payment of the war-charges, had been made over to Guláb Singh, chief of the great Jamú family, who had paid a million of money for the cession. But the transfer had been resisted by the local governor, who had ruled the province under the Sikh Rajahs, and covertly Lál Singh had encouraged the resistance. The nominal offender was brought to public trial, but it was felt that the real criminal was Lál Singh, and that upon the issue of the inquiry depended the fate of the minister. It was soon apparent that he was a traitor, and that the other, though, for intelligible reasons of his own, reluctant to render an account of his stewardship, was little more than a tool in his hands. The disgrace of the minister was the immediate result of the investigation. He left the Durbar tent a prisoner under a guard, an hour before his own body-guard, of Sikh soldiers; and the great seal of the Maharajah was placed in the hands of the British Resident. So fell Lál Singh; and so fell also the first experiment to reconstruct a strong Sikh Government on a basis of national independence.

Dec. 1846.

Another experiment was then to be tried. There was not a native of the country to whose hands the destinies of the empire could be safely entrusted. If the power of the English conqueror were demanded to overawe the turbulent military element, English wisdom and English integrity were no less needed, in that conjuncture, to quicken and to purify the corrupt councils of the State. Sikh statesmanship, protected against the armed violence of the Prætorian bands, which had overthrown so many ministries, had been fairly tried, and had been found miserably wanting. A purely native Government was not to be hazarded again. Averse as Hardinge had been, and still was, to sanction British interference in the internal administration of the Panjáb, there was that in the complications before him which compelled him to overcome his reluctance. The choice, indeed, lay between a half measure, which might

succeed, though truly there was small hope of success, and the total abandonment of the country to its own vices, which would have been speedily followed, in self-defence, by our direct assumption of the Government on our own account. Importuned by the Sikh Durbar, in the name of the Maharajah, Hardinge tried the former course. The next effort, therefore, to save the Sikh Empire from self-destruction embraced the idea of a native Government, presided over by a British statesman. A Council of Regency was instituted, to be composed of Sikh chiefs, under the superintendence and control of the Resident; or, in other words, the British Resident became the virtual ruler of the country.

And this time the choice, or rather the accident, of the man was as propitious, as before it had been untoward and perverse. The English officer possessed well-nigh all the qualities which the Sikh Sirdar so deplorably lacked. A captain of the Bengal Artillery, holding the higher rank of colonel by brevet for good service, Henry Lawrence had graduated in Panjábi diplomacy under George Clerk, and had accompanied to Kábul the Sikh Contingent, attached to Pollock's retributory force, combating its dubious fidelity, and controlling its predatory excesses on the way. After the return of the expedition to the British provinces, he had been appointed to represent our interests in Nipál; and there—for there was a lull in the sanguinary intrigues of that semi-barbarous Court—immersed in his books, and turning to good literary purpose his hours of leisure, he received at Katmandu intelligence of the Sikh invasion, and of the death of George Broadfoot, and was summoned to take the place of that lamented officer as the agent of the Governor-General on the frontier. In the negotiations which followed the conquest of the Khálsa army, he had taken the leading part, and, on the restoration of peace, had been appointed to the office of British Resident, or Minister, at Lahor, under the first experiment of a pure Sikh Government hedged in by British troops.

If the character of the man thus placed at the head of affairs could have secured the success of this great compromise, it would have been successful far beyond the expectations of its projectors. For no man ever undertook a high and important trust with a more solemn sense of his responsibility, or ever, with more singleness of purpose and more steadfast sincerity of heart, set himself to work, with God's blessing, to turn a great

opportunity to great account for the benefit of his fellows. In Henry Lawrence a pure transparent nature, a simple manliness and truthfulness of character, were combined with high intellectual powers, and personal energies which nothing earthly could subdue. I may say it here, once for all, at the very outset of my story, that nowhere does this natural simplicity and truthfulness of character so often as in India survive a long career of public service. In that country public men are happily not exposed to the pernicious influences which in England shrivel them so fast into party leaders and parliamentary chiefs. With perfect singleness of aim and pure sincerity of purpose, they go, with level eyes, straight at the public good, never looking up in fear at the suspended sword of a parliamentary majority, and never turned aside by that fear into devious paths of trickery and finesse. It may be that ever since the days of Clive and Omichund an unsavoury odour has pervaded the reputation of Oriental diplomacy; but the fact is, that our greatest successes have been achieved by men incapable of deceit, and by means which have invited scrutiny. When we have opposed craft to craft, and have sought to out-juggle our opponents, the end has been commonly disastrous. It is only by consummate honesty and transparent truthfulness that the Talleyrands of the East have been beaten by such mere children in the world's ways as Mountstuart Elphinstone, Charles Metcalfe, James Outram, and Henry Lawrence.

Henry Lawrence, indeed, was wholly without guile. He had great shrewdness and sagacity of character, and he could read and understand motives, to which his own breast was a stranger, for he had studied well the Oriental character. But he was singularly open and unreserved in all his dealings, and would rather have given his antagonist an advantage than have condescended to any small arts and petty trickeries to secure success. All men, indeed, trusted him; for they knew that there was nothing selfish or sordid about him; that the one desire of his heart was to benefit the people of the country in which it had pleased God to cast his lot. But he never suffered this plea of beneficence to prevail against his sense of justice. He was eminently, indeed, a just man, and altogether incapable of that casuistry which gives a gloss of humanity to self-seeking, and robs people for their own good. He did not look upon the misgovernment of a native State as a valid reason for the absorption of its revenues, but thought that British power

might be exercised for the protection of the oppressed, and British wisdom for the instruction and reformation of their oppressors, without adding a few more thousand square miles to the area of our British possessions, and a few more millions of people to the great muster-roll of British subjects in the East.

Above the middle height, of a spare, gaunt frame, and a worn face bearing upon it the traces of mental toil and bodily suffering, he impressed you, at first sight, rather with a sense of masculine energy and resolution than of any milder and more endearing qualities. But when you came to know him, you saw at once that beneath that rugged exterior there was a heart gentle as a woman's, and you recognised in his words and in his manner the kindliness of nature, which won the affection of all who came within its reach, and by its large and liberal manifestations made his name a very household word with thousands who had never felt the pressure of his hand or stood in his living presence. But, with all this, though that name was in men's mouths and spoken in many languages, no unknown subaltern had a more lowly mind or a more unassuming deportment.

Such was the man who now found himself the virtual sovereign of the empire of Ranjít Singh. The new protectorate, established at the end of 1846, gave to Henry Lawrence "unlimited authority," "to direct and control every department of the State." He was to be assisted in this great work by an efficient establishment of subordinates, but it was no part of the design to confer upon them the executive management of affairs. The old officers of the Sikh Government were left to carry on the administration, guided and directed by their British allies. Under such a system corruption and oppression could no longer run riot over the face of the land. It was a protectorate for the many, not for the few; and for a while it seemed that all classes were pleased with the arrangement. Outwardly, indeed, it did not seem that feelings of resentment against the British Government were cherished by any persons but the Queen-Mother and her degraded paramour.

And so, in the spring of 1847, the political horizon was almost unclouded. The Council of Regency, under the control of Henry Lawrence, seemed to be carrying on the government with a sincere desire to secure a successful result. Tranquillity had been restored; confidence and order were fast returning.

The Sikh soldiery appeared to be contented with their lot, and to be gradually acquiring habits of discipline and obedience, under a system which rendered them dependent on the British officers for whatever most promoted their interests and contributed to their comforts. But it did not escape the sagacious mind of the Resident, that serene as was the aspect of affairs, and promising as were the indications of continued repose, there were, beneath all this surface-calm, dangerous elements at work, waiting only for time and circumstance to call them into full activity. The memory of frequent defeat was still too fresh in the minds of the humbled Khálsa to suffer them to indulge in visions of at once re-acquiring their lost supremacy. But as time passed and the impression waxed fainter and fainter, it was well-nigh certain that the old hopes would revive, and that outbursts of desperate Asiatic zeal might be looked for in quarters where such paroxysms had long seemed to be necessary to the very existence of a lawless and tumultuous class. It is a trick of our self-love—of our national vanity—to make us too often delude ourselves with the belief that British supremacy must be welcome wheresoever it obtrudes itself. But Henry Lawence did not deceive himself in this wise. He frankly admitted that, however benevolent our motives, and however conciliatory our demeanour, a British army could not garrison Lahor, and a British functionary supersede the Sikh Durbar, without exciting bitter discontents and perilous resentments. He saw around him, struggling for existence, so many high officers of the old Sikh armies, so many favourites of the old line of Wazírs now cast adrift upon the world, without resources and without hope under the existing system, that when he remembered their lawless habits, their headstrong folly, their desperate suicidal zeal, he could but wonder at the perfect peace which then pervaded the land.

But whatsoever might be taking shape in the future, the present was a season of prosperity—a time of promise—and the best uses were made by the British functionaries of the continued calm. Interference in the civil administration of the country was exercised only when it could be turned to the very apparent advantage of the people. British authority and British integrity were then employed in the settlement of long-unsettled districts, and in the development of the resources of long-neglected tracts of country. The subordinate officers thus employed under the Resident were few, but they were men of

no common ability and energy of character—soldiers such as Edwardes, Nicholson, Reynell Taylor, Lake, Lumsden, Becher, George Lawrence, and James Abbott; civilians such as Vans Agnew and Arthur Cocks—men, for the most part, whose deeds will find ample record in these pages. They had unbounded confidence in their chief, and their chief had equal confidence in them. Acting, with but few exceptions, for the majority were soldiers, in a mixed civil and military character, they associated with all classes of the community; and alike by their courage and their integrity they sustained the high character of the nation they represented. One common spirit of humanity seemed to animate the Governor-General, the Resident, and his Assistants. A well-aimed blow was struck at infanticide, at Satí, and at the odious traffic in female slaves. In the agricultural districts, a system of enforced labour, which had pressed heavily on the ryots, was soon also in course of abolition. The weak were everywhere protected against the strong. An entire revision of the judicial and revenue systems of the country—if systems they can be called, where system there was none—was attempted, and with good success. New customs rules were prepared, by which the people were greatly gainers. Every legitimate means of increasing the revenue, and of controlling unnecessary expenditure, were resorted to, and large savings were effected at no loss of efficiency in any department of the State. The cultivators were encouraged to sink wells, to irrigate their lands, and otherwise to increase the productiveness of the soil, alike to their own advantage and the profit of the State. And whilst everything was thus being done to advance the general prosperity of the people, and to ensure the popularity of British occupation among the industrial classes, the Army was propitiated by the introduction of new and improved systems of pay and pension, and taught to believe that what they had lost in opportunities of plunder, and in irregular largesses, had been more than made up to them by certainty and punctuality of payment, and the interest taken by the British officers in the general welfare of their class.

As the year advanced, these favourable appearances rather improved than deteriorated. In June, the Resident reported that a large majority of the disbanded soldiers had returned to the plough or to trade, and that the advantages of British influence to the cultivating classes were every day becoming

more apparent. But still Lawrence clearly discerned the fact that although the spirit of insurrection was at rest in the Panjáb, it was not yet dead. There were sparks flying about here and there, which, alighting on combustible materials, might speedily excite a blaze. "If every Sirdar and Sikh in the Panjáb," he wrote, with the candour and good sense which are so conspicuous in all his communications, "were to avow himself satisfied with the humbled position of his country, it would be the extreme of infatuation to believe him, or to doubt for a moment that among the crowd who are loudest in our praise there are many who cannot forgive our victory, or even our forbearance, and who chafe at their own loss of power in exact proportion as they submit to ours." People were not wanting even then, in our camp, to talk with ominous head-shakings of the "Kábul Catastrophe," and to predict all sorts of massacres and misfortunes. But there was no parallel to be drawn between the two cases, for an overweening sense of security had not taken possession of the British functionaries at Lahor. They had not brought themselves to believe that the country was "settled," or that British occupation was "popular" among the chiefs and people of the Panjáb. With God's blessing they were doing their best to deserve success, but they knew well that they might some day see the ruin of their hopes, the failure of their experiments, and they were prepared, in the midst of prosperity, at any hour to confront disaster.

Even then, fair as was the prospect before us, there was one great blot upon the landscape; for whilst the restless nature of the Queen-Mother was solacing itself with dark intrigues, there was a continual source of disquietude to disturb the mind of the Resident with apprehensions of probable outbreaks and seditions. She hated the British with a deadly hatred. They had deprived her of power. They had torn her lover from her arms. They were training her son to become a puppet in their hands. To foment hostility against them, wheresoever there seemed to be any hope of successful revolt, and to devise a plot for the murder of the Resident, were among the cherished objects by which she sought to gratify her malice. But she could not thus labour in secret. Her schemes were detected, and it was determined to remove her from Lahor. The place of banishment was Shekhopúr, in a quiet part of the country, and in the midst of a Musulman population. When the decision

was communicated to her by her brother, she received it with apparent indifference. She was not one to give her enemies an advantage by confessing her wounds and bewailing her lot. She uttered no cry of pain, but said that she was ready for anything, and at once prepared for the journey.

The autumn passed quietly away. But an important change was impending. Lord Hardinge was about to lay down the reins of government, and Colonel Lawrence to leave the Panjáb for a time. The health of the latter had long been failing. He had tried in August and September the effect of the bracing hill air of Simla. It had revived him for a while, but his medical attendants urged him to resort to the only remedy which could arrest the progress of the disease; and so, with extreme reluctance, he consented to quit his post, and to accompany Lord Hardinge to England. He went; and Sir Frederick Currie, a public servant of approved talent and integrity, who, in the capacity of Political Secretary, had accompanied the Governor-General to the banks of the Satlaj, and who had been subsequently created a baronet and appointed a member of the Supreme Council of India, was nominated to act as Resident in his place.

Meeting the stream of European revolution as they journeyed homewards, Hardinge and Lawrence came overland to England in the early spring of 1848. Brief space is allowed to me for comment; but before I cease to write Lord Hardinge's name in connection with Sikh politics and history, I must give expression, if only in a single sentence, to the admiration with which I regard his entire policy towards the Panjáb. It was worthy of a Christian warrior: it was worthy of a Christian statesman. It is in no wise to be judged by results, still less by accidents not assignable to errors inherent in the original design. What Hardinge did, he did because it was right to do it. His forbearance under provocation, his moderation in the hour of victory foreshadowed the humanity of his subsequent measures. It was his one desire to render British connection with the Panjáb a blessing to the Sikhs, without destroying their national independence. The spirit of Christian philanthropy moved at his bidding over the whole face of the country—not the mere image of a specious benevolence disguising the designs of our ambition and the impulses of our greed, but an honest, hearty desire to do good without gain, to save an Empire, to reform a people, and to leave behind us

the marks of a hand at once gentle and powerful—gentle to cherish and powerful only to sustain.

Conquest of the Panjáb.

The portfolio of the Indian Government now passed into the hands of Lord Dalhousie, a young statesman of high promise, who, in the divisions of party politics at home, had been ranged among the followers of Sir Robert Peel, and professed the newly-developed liberalism of that great parliamentary chief. Held in esteem as a man of moderate views, of considerable administrative ability, and more than common assiduity in the public service, his brief career as an English statesman seemed to afford good hope that, in the great descriptive roll of Indian Viceroys, his name would be recorded as that of a ruler distinguished rather for the utility than for the brilliancy of his administration. And so, doubtless, it seemed to himself. What India most wanted at that time was Peace. Left to her repose, even without external aid, she might soon have recovered from the effects of a succession of wasting wars. But, cherished and fostered by an unambitious and enlightened ruler, there was good prospect of a future of unexampled prosperity—of great material and moral advancement—of that oft-promised, ever realisable, but still unrealised blessing, the "development of the resources of the country." The country wanted railroads, and the people education, and there was good hope that Dalhousie would give them both.

When he looked beyond the frontier he saw that everything was quiet. The new year had dawned auspiciously on the Panjáb. The attention of the British functionaries, ever earnest and active in well-doing—for the disciples of Henry Lawrence had caught much of the zealous humanity of their master—was mainly directed to the settlement of the Land Revenue and the improvement of the judicial system of the country. They had begun codifying in good earnest, and laws, civil and criminal, grew apace under their hands. In a state of things so satisfactory as this there was little to call for special remark, and the Governor-General, in his letters to the Home Government, contented himself with the simple observation, that he "forwarded papers relating to the Panjáb." But early in May intelligence had reached Calcutta which impelled him to indite a more stirring epistle. The Panjáb was on the eve of another crisis.

In September, 1844, Sáwan Mall, the able and energetic Governor * of Multán, was shot to death by an assassin. He was succeeded by his son Mulráj, who also had earned for himself the reputation of a chief with just and enlightened views of government, and considerable administrative ability. But he had also a reputation very dangerous in that country: he was reputed to be very rich. Sáwan Mall was believed to have amassed immense treasures in Multán; and on the instalment of his son in the government, the Lahor Durbar demanded from him a succession duty † of a million of money. The exorbitant claim was not complied with; but a compromise was effected, by which Mulráj became bound to pay to Lahor less than a fifth of the required amount. And this sum would have been paid, but for the convulsions which soon began to rend the country, and the disasters which befell the Durbar.

On the re-establishment of the Sikh Government the claim was renewed. It was intimated to the Diwán that if the stipulated eighteen lakhs, with certain amounts due for arrears, were paid into the Lahor Treasury, he would be allowed to continue in charge of Multán; but that if he demurred, troops would be sent to coerce him. He refused payment of the money, and troops were accordingly sent against him. Thus threatened, he besought the British Government to interfere in his favour, and consented to adjust the matter through the arbitration of the Resident. The result was, that he went to Lahor in the autumn of 1846; promised to pay by instalments the money claimed; and was mulcted in a portion of the territories from which he had drawn his revenue. The remainder was farmed out to him for a term of three years. With this arrangement he appeared to be satisfied. He was anxious to obtain the guarantee of the British Government; but his request was refused, and he returned to Multán without it.

For the space of more than a year, Mulráj remained in peaceful occupation of the country which had been leased out to him. There was no attempt, on the part of the British functionaries, to interfere with the affairs of Multán. That territory was especially exempted from the operation of the revenue settle-

* I have used the word most intelligible to ordinary English readers, but it does not fitly represent the office held by the "Diwán," who was financial manager or revenue-farmer of the district, with the control of the internal administration.

† Nazurána.

ment, which had taken effect elsewhere, and of the new customs regulations which had been established in other parts of the Panjáb. But the compact which had been entered into with the Lahor Durbar did not sit easily upon him. He thought, or affected to think, that its terms were too rigorous; and accordingly, about the close of 1847, he repaired to the capital to seek some remission of them. He soon began intriguing with the Durbar for the reduction of the stipulated rents; and not coming to any satisfactory arrangement, intimated his wish to resign a charge which he had found so little profitable. He was told that his resignation, when formally tendered, would be accepted; but was recommended to reflect upon the subject before finally coming to a determination, which could not be subsequently revoked. Mulráj quitted Lahor; and sent in first a somewhat vague, and afterwards a more distinct, resignation of his office; and the Durbar at once appointed a successor. Sirdar Khán Singh, who was described as a "brave soldier and intelligent man," was nominated to the Governorship of Multán, on a fixed annual salary. At the same time, Mr. Vans Agnew, a civil servant of the Company, and Lieutenant Anderson, of the Bombay army, were despatched to Multán with the new Governor, and an escort of five hundred men, to receive charge of the place. On their arrival before the city there were no symptoms of any hostile intentions on the part of its occupants. Mulráj himself waited on the British officers on the 18th of April, and was peremptorily called upon to give in his accounts. Disconcerted and annoyed, he quitted their presence, but next morning he met them with a calm aspect, and conducted them through the fort. Two companies of Gúrkhas and some horsemen of the escort were placed in possession of one of the fort-gates. The crisis was now at hand. Mulráj formally gave over charge of the fort; and as the party retired through the gate, the British officers were suddenly attacked and severely wounded. Mulráj, who was riding with them at the time, offered no assistance, but, setting spurs to his horse, galloped off in the direction of his garden-house, whilst the wounded officers were carried to their own camp by Khán Singh and a party of the Gúrkhas.

In the course of the following day all the Multáni troops were in a state of open insurrection. Mulráj himself, who may not have been guilty in the first instance of an act of premeditated treachery, and who subsequently pleaded that he was

coerced by his troops, sent excuses to Vans Agnew, who, with the generous confidence of youth, acquitted him of all participation in the outrage. But he was soon heart and soul in the work; and his emissaries plied their trade of corruption with unerring effect. Before nightfall, the commandant of the escort, with all his men, went over to the enemy. The building in which the wounded officers lay was surrounded. A motley crew of ruffians—soldiers and citizens—men of all classes, young and old, moved by one common impulse, one great thirst of blood, came yelling and shouting around the abode of the doomed Faringhís. In they rushed, with a savage cry, and surrounded their victims. The wounded officers lay armed on their beds, and helpless, hopeless as they were, put on the bold front of intrepid Englishmen, and were heroes to the last. Having shaken hands, and bade each other a last farewell, they turned upon their assailants as best they could; but, overpowered by numbers, they fell, declaring in the prophetic language of death, that thousands of their countrymen would come to avenge them. The slaughter thoroughly accomplished, the two bodies were dragged out of the mosque, and barbarously mutilated by the murderers, with every indignity that malice could devise.

Irretrievably committed in the eyes both of our countrymen and his own, Mulráj now saw that there was no going back; he had entered, whether designedly or not, on a course which admitted of no pause, and left no time for reflection. All the dormant energies of his nature were now called into full activity. He took command of the insurgents—identified himself with their cause—bestowed largesses upon the men who had been most active in the assault upon the British officers, retained all who would take service with him, laid in stores, collected money, and addressed letters to other chiefs urging them to resistance. He had never been looked upon by others—never regarded himself—as a man to become the leader of a great national movement; but now circumstances had done for him what he would never willingly have shaped out for himself; so he bowed to fate, and became a hero.

Thus was the second Sikh War commenced. Outwardly, it was but the revolt of a local government—the rebellion of an officer of the Sikh State against the sovereign power of the land. But, rightly considered, it was of far deeper significance. Whether Mulráj had been incited to resistance by the promptings of a spirit far more bitter in its resentments, and more

active in its malignity than his own, is not very apparent. But it is certain that when he raised the standard of rebellion at Multán, he did but anticipate a movement for which the whole country was ripe. Already had ominous reports of ill-concealed disaffection come in from some of the outlying districts, and though the mortifying fact was very reluctantly believed, it is certain that the state of things which Henry Lawrence had predicted was already a present reality, and that the Sikhs, chafing under the irritating interference of the European stranger, were about to make a common effort to expel him. A finer body of officers than those employed under the British Resident in the Panjáb seldom laboured for the good of a people. That they worked, earnestly and assiduously, animated by the purest spirit of Christian benevolence, is not to be doubted. But it was not in the nature of things that even if the thing done had been palatable to the Sikhs, they would have reconciled themselves to the doers of it. Habituated to rule in all parts of the world, and to interfere in the affairs of people of all colours and creeds, Englishmen are slow to familiarise themselves with the idea of the too probable unpopularity of their interference. They think that if they mean well they must secure confidence. They do not consider that our beneficent ways may not be more in accordance with the national taste than our round hats and stiff neckcloths; and that even if they were, alien interference must in itself be utterly distasteful to them. It is not to be doubted, I say, that the young Englishmen first employed in the Panjáb laboured earnestly for the good of the people; but their very presence was a sore in the flesh of the nation, and if they had been endowed with superhuman wisdom and angelic benevolence, it would have made no difference in the sum total of popular discontent.

But it is probable that some mistakes were committed—the inevitable growth of benevolent ignorance and energetic inexperience—at the outset of our career as Panjábi administrators. The interference appears to have been greater than was contemplated in the original design of the Second Protectorate. At that time the God Terminus was held by many of our administrators in especial veneration. The Theodolite, the Reconnoitring Compass, and the Measuring Chain were the great emblems of British rule. And now these mysterious instruments began to make their appearance in the Panjáb. We were

taking sights and measuring angles on the outskirts of civilisation; and neither the chiefs nor the people could readily persuade themselves that we were doing all this for their good; there was an appearance in it of ulterior design. And, as I have hinted, the agents employed were sometimes wholly inexperienced in business of this kind. "My present *rôle*," wrote a young ensign * of two years' standing in the service, whose later exploits will be recorded in these pages, "is to survey a part of the country lying along the left bank of the Rávi and below the hills, and I am daily and all day at work with compasses and chain, pen and pencil, following streams, diving into valleys, burrowing into hills, to complete my work. I need hardly remark, that having never attempted anything of the kind, it is bothering at first. I should not be surprised any day to be told to build a ship, compose a code of laws, or hold assizes. In fact, 'tis the way in India; every one has to teach himself his work, and to do it at the same time." Training of this kind has made the finest race of officers that the world has ever seen. But the novitiate of these men may have teemed with blunders fatal to the people among whom they were sent, in all the self-confidence of youth, to learn their diversities of work. As they advance in years, and every year know better how difficult a thing it is to administer the affairs of a foreign people, such public servants often shudder to think of the errors committed, of the wrong done, when they served their apprenticeship in government without a master, and taught themselves at the expense of thousands. The most experienced administrators in the present case might have failed from the want of a right understanding of the temper of the people. But it was the necessity of our position that some who were set over the officers of the Sikh Government knew little of the people and little of administration. They were able, indefatigable, and conscientious. They erred only because they saw too much and did too much, and had not come to understand the wise policy of shutting their eyes and leaving alone.

And so, although the rebellion of Mulráj was at first only a local outbreak, and the British authorities were well disposed to regard it as a movement against the Sikh Government, not

* W. R. Hodson ("Hodson of Hodson's Horse"), January, 1848. This young officer narrowly escaped the fate of Anderson at Multán, for he had been selected in the first instance to accompany Vans Agnew.

as an outrage especially directed against ourselves, that fiction could not be long maintained—for every day it became more and more apparent that the whole country was ripe for another war with the intruding Faringhí. The Durbar officers did not hesitate to express their conviction that to send Sikh troops to act against Mulráj would only be to swell the number of his adherents. To have despatched with them a small English force would have been to risk its safety and precipitate the conflict. An overwhelming display of force, on the part of the British Government, might have crushed the rebellion at Multán and retarded the general rising of the country. But the season was far advanced; the responsibility was a great one. The Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India was not far distant. Currie, therefore, though his own judgment inclined to the commencement of immediate hostilities, rightly referred the momentous question to the military chief. Lord Gough was against immediate action; and the head of the Indian Government unreservedly endorsed the decision.

The remnant of the old Khálsa army eagerly watched the result, and were not slow to attribute our inactivity, at such a moment, to hesitation—to fear—to paralysis. I am not writing a military history of the Second Sikh War, and the question now suggested is one which I am not called upon to discuss. But I think that promptitude of action is often of more importance than completeness of preparation, and that to show ourselves confident of success is in most cases to attain it. The British power in India cannot afford to be quiescent under insult and outrage. Delay is held to be a sign of weakness. It encourages enmity and confirms vacillation. It is a disaster in itself—more serious, often, than any that can arise from insufficient preparation, and that great bugbear the inclemency of the season. On the other hand, it is not to be forgotten that to despise our enemies is a common national mistake, and that sometimes it has been a fatal one. We have brought calamities on ourselves by our rashness as we have by our indecision. The History of India teems with examples of both results; the most profitable lesson to be learnt from which is, that, however wise we may be after the event, criticism in such a case ought to be diffident and forbearing.

But whilst the Commander-in-Chief, in the cool mountain air of Simla, was deciding on the impossibility of commencing military operations, a young lieutenant of the Bengal army, who

had been engaged in the Revenue settlement of the country about Banú, was marching down upon Multán with a small body of troops, to render assistance to his brother-officers in their perilous position, and to support the authority of the Lahor Durbar. A letter from Vans Agnew, dictated by the wounded man, had providentially fallen into his hands. He saw at once the emergency of the case; he never hesitated; but abandoning all other considerations, improvised the best force that could be got together, and, with fifteen hundred men and two pieces of artillery, marched forth in all the eager confidence of youth, hoping that it might be his privilege to rescue his countrymen from the danger that beset them.

The name of this young officer was Herbert Edwardes. A native of Frodley, in Shropshire, the son of a country clergyman, educated at King's College, London, he had entered the Company's service as a cadet of infantry, at an age somewhat more advanced than that which sees the initiation into military life of the majority of young officers. But at an age much earlier than that which commonly places them in possession of the most superficial knowledge of the history and politics of the East, young Edwardes had acquired a stock of information, and a capacity for judging rightly of passing events, which would have done no discredit to a veteran soldier and diplomatist. He had served but a few years, when his name became familiar to English readers throughout the Presidency to which he belonged, as one of the ablest anonymous writers in the country. His literary talents, like his military qualities, were of a bold, earnest, impulsive character. Whatever he did, he did rapidly and well. He was precisely the kind of man to attract the attention and retain the favour of such an officer as Henry Lawrence, who, with the same quiet love of literature, combined a keen appreciation of that energy and fire of character which shrinks from no responsibility, and are ever seeking to find an outlet in dashing exploits. In one of the earliest and most striking scenes of the Panjábi drama, Edwardes had acted a distinguished part. When the insurrection broke out in Kashmír, he was despatched to Jamú, to awaken Guláb Singh to a sense of his duty in that conjuncture; and there are few more memorable and impressive incidents in Sikh history than that which exhibited a handful of British officers controlling the movements of large bodies of foreign troops,—the very men, and under the very leaders, who, so short a time before, had

contested with us on the banks of the Satlaj the sovereignty of Hindustan.

On the reconstruction of the Sikh Government, after the deposition of Lál Singh, Herbert Edwardes was one of the officers selected to superintend the internal administration of the country; and he had just completed the Revenue settlement of Banú, when the startling intelligence of the Multán outbreak reached his camp. He marched at once to succour his brother-officers; crossed the Indus, and took possession of Leia, the chief city in the Sindh Ságar Duáb. But tidings by this time had reached him of the melancholy fate of Agnew and Anderson, and there was then no profit in the immediate movement on Multán to compensate for its certain danger. But the demonstration still had its uses. It was something that there was a force in the field with a British officer at the head of it to assert the cause of order and authority in the name of the Maharajah of the Panjáb. Such a force might, for a time at least, hold rebellion in check in that part of the country. But Edwardes dreamt of higher services than this. To the south of Multán, some fifty miles, lies Bahávalpúr, in the chief of which place we believed that we had a staunch ally. In the name of the British Government, Edwardes called upon him to move an auxiliary force upon Multán; and he had little doubt that, after forming a junction with these troops, he could capture the rebel stronghold. The confidence of the young soldier, stimulated by a victory which he gained over a large body of rebels on the great anniversary of Waterloo, saw no obstacle to this enterprise which could not be overcome if the Resident would only send him a few heavy guns and mortars, and Major Napier, of the Engineers, to direct the operations of the siege. He knew the worth of such a man in such a conjuncture, and every year that has since passed has made him prouder of the youthful forecast which he then evinced.

The Bahávalpúr troops were sent, the junction was formed, and the force marched down upon Multán. Placing himself at the head of a considerable body of men, the rebel chief went out to give them battle, but was beaten by Edwardes, aided by Van Cortlandt, a European officer in Sikh employ, who has since done good service to the British Government, and Edward Lake, a gallant young officer of Bengal Engineers, directing the Bahávalpúr column, who has abundantly fulfilled, on the same theatre of action, the high promise of his youth.

But much as irregular levies, so led, might do in the open field, they were powerless against the walls of Multán. Again, therefore, Edwardes urged upon the Resident the expediency of strengthening his hands, especially in respect of the ordnance branches of the service. Only send a siege train, some Sappers and Miners, with Robert Napier to direct the siege, and—this time, for the difficulties of the work had assumed larger proportions in his eyes—a few regular regiments, under a young brigadier, and we shall "close," he said, "Mulráj's account in a fortnight, and obviate the necessity of assembling fifty thousand men in October."

In the early part of July this requisition was received at Lahor. The interval which had elapsed, since the disastrous tidings of the rebellion of Mulráj had reached the Residency, had not been an uneventful one at the capital. Early in May, discovery was made of an attempt to corrupt the fidelity of our British Sipáhis. The first intimation of the plot was received from some troopers of the 7th Irregular Cavalry, who communicated the circumstance to their commanding officer. The principal conspirators were one Khán Singh, an unemployed general of the Sikh army, and Ganga Rám, the confidential Vakíl of the Maharaní. These men, and two others, were seized, tried, and convicted. The two chief conspirators were publicly hanged, and their less guilty associates transported. That they were instruments of the Maharaní was sufficiently proved. The conspirators acknowledged that she was the prime instigator of the treacherous attempt, and her letters were found in their possession. With this knowledge, it could no longer be a question with the Resident as to what course it behoved him to adopt. The mother of the Maharajah and the widow of Ranjít Singh could no longer be suffered to dwell among the Sikhs. She had already been removed from Lahor to Shekhopúr. It now became necessary to remove her from the Panjáb. Accordingly, certain accredited agents of the Lahor Durbar, accompanied by two British officers, Captain Lumsden and Lieutenant Hodson, were despatched to Shekhopúr, with a mandate under the seal of the Maharajah, directing her removal from that place. Without offering any resistance, or expressing any dissatisfaction, she placed herself under the charge of the deputation; and, when it became clear to her that she was on her way to the British frontier, she desired—not improbably with that blended irony and

bravado which she so well knew how to employ—that her thanks might be conveyed to the Resident for removing her to the Company's dominions, out of the reach of the enemies who would destroy her. With a considerable retinue of female attendants, she was conveyed to Firuzpúr, and eventually to Banáras, where she was placed under the charge of Major George Macgregor, an Artillery officer of high personal character and great diplomatic experience, who had well sustained in the Panjáb the brilliant reputation which he had earned at Jalálábád.

Such was the apparent growth visible at the British Residency, recognised in our State-papers, of those three months in the Panjáb. But in the hands of a Sikh historian these incidents would form but a small part of the national annals, for all over the country the great chiefs were actively maturing the plan of their emancipation, calling upon all true Sikhs, in the name of the great Founder of their Faith, to exterminate the Christian usurpers, and even those nearest to the throne were among the arch promoters of the movement. The daughter of Chatar Singh and the sister of Shér Singh was the betrothed wife of the Maharajah; but these Sirdars, though anxious to veil their designs until the whole country was ripe for a simultaneous rising, were intriguing and plotting for our overthrow. The former was in the Hazárah, where his fidelity had been for some time suspected by James Abbott—another officer of the Bengal Artillery, friend and comrade of Henry Lawrence, who had been settling that part of the country—one of those men whose lot in life it is never to be believed, never to be appreciated, never to be rewarded; of the true salt of the earth, but of an unrecognised savour; chivalrous, heroic, but somehow or other never thoroughly emerging from the shade. He was not one to estimate highly the force of the maxim that "speech is silver, silence is gold;" and his suspicions are said not to have been acceptable at Lahor. But though it may be good to suspect, it is doubtless good, also, not to appear to suspect. And if Currie, in that conjuncture, had betrayed a want of confidence in the Sikh Sirdars, he would have precipitated the collision which it was sound policy to retard. So, whatever may have been his genuine convictions, he still appeared to trust the chiefs of the Regency; and Shér Singh, with a strong body of Sikh troops, was sent down to Multán. It was wise to maintain, as long as possible, the semblance of the authority of

the Sikh Durbar—wise to keep up the show of suppressing a rebellion by the hand of the native Government. To send down that undeveloped traitor to the great centre of revolt may have been a hazardous experiment, but it was hazardous also to keep him where he was; and the master-passion of the Sikh soldiery for plunder might have kept his battalions nominally on the side of authority, until they had glutted themselves with the spoils of Multán, and preparations had, meanwhile, been made in the British provinces for the commencement of military operations on a scale befitting the occasion. But the repeated requisitions of Edwardes for British aid at last wrought upon the Resident, and Currie determined to send a force to Multán, with a siege-train for the reduction of the fortress. In General Samson Whish, of the Artillery, under whose command the force was despatched, there was not literally what Edwardes had asked for—"a young brigadier"—but there was a general officer of unwonted youthfulness of aspect and activity of body, who could sit a horse well, could ride any distance at a stretch, and was generally esteemed to be one of the best artillery officers in the service. This forward movement was not countenanced in high places. The Commander-in-Chief shook his head. The Governor-General shook his head. But the Resident had ordered it, and it could not be countermanded without encouraging a belief that there was a want of unanimity in British councils.

So the besieging force marched upon Multán, and arrived before the city in high health and excellent spirits. On the 5th of September, in the name of the Maharajah and Queen Victoria, the British General summoned the garrison to surrender. No answer was returned to the summons, and the siege commenced. But on the 14th, when our guns were within breaching distance of the walls of the town, Whish, to his bitter mortification, was compelled to abandon the siege. The Sikh force under Shér Singh had gone over to the enemy.

This event had long been matter of anxious speculation in the British camp, and now took no one by surprise. It was known that the hearts of the soldiery were with Mulráj; but there was something of a more doubtful character in the conduct of the Rajah himself, who had on more than one occasion testified his zeal and loyalty by voluntary acts of service in our cause. In his own camp, the Khálsa troops said contemptuously, that he was a Músulman. With Edwardes he was outwardly

on the best possible terms; spoke freely of the conduct of his father, Chatar Singh; declared that he washed his hands of all the old man's rebellious projects; and candidly avowed his mistrust of the Sikh troops. But in all this he was playing a part. He had written to his brother to say that he intended to go over to the enemy on that very 14th of September, and he kept his word to the letter. On the morning of that day, the whole Durbar force sought entrance into the city. Doubtful of the real nature of the movement, Mulráj at first refused them admittance: but soon satisfied of their intentions, he opened the gates; the long dreaded and fatal junction was effected; and the British General was under the mortifying necessity of raising the siege of Multán.

The whole truth was now visible before the world. It was impossible any longer to maintain the fiction of a local rebellion, to pretend that the Lahor Government, assisted by British troops, was endeavouring to coerce a refractory subject. The very heads of that Government were in open hostility to the British, raising the standard of nationality in the name of the Maharajah. It was obvious that the war now about to be waged, was between the British and the Sikhs. Some hope was at one time to be drawn from the fact of long-standing feuds among the different Sikh families. Then there was the not unreasonable conviction that the Muhammadan population of the Panjáb might easily be kept in a state of enmity with the Sikhs. But these assurances soon melted away. Hostile families and hostile religions were content to unite for the nonce against the Faringhís: and the Commander-in-Chief, as the cold weather approached, was gratified by finding that there had been no premature birth of victory—that the work was yet to be done—and that an army of twenty thousand men, under his personal command, was required to take the field.

And from that time Multán ceased to be the focus of rebellion and the head-quarters of the war. In the Hazárah country Chatar Singh had thrown off all vestments of disguise, and plunged boldly into the troubled waters that lay before him. The thoughts of Shér Singh soon began to turn towards that quarter—indeed, such had been his desire from the first—and before the second week of October had passed away, he had marched out of Multán to join his father. The whole country was now rising against us. Having used the name of the

Maharajah, the Sikh leaders were eager to possess themselves of the person of the boy-King, and but for the vigilance of the Resident they would have achieved an object which would have added a new element of strength to the national cause. Dhulíp Singh remained in our hands virtually a prisoner at Lahor.

All this time the Governor-General was at Calcutta, watching from a distance the progress of events, and betraying no eagerness to seize a favourable opportunity for the conquest of the Panjáb. Indeed, it has been imputed to him, as a grave political error, that he did not at an earlier period make due preparation for the inevitable war. But, it would seem that in the summer of 1848, his desire was to recognise as long as possible only internal rebellion in the Sikh country—to see, not the rising of a nation against a foreign intruder, but the revolt of a few unloyal chiefs against their own lawful sovereign. But with the first breath of the cool season there came a truer conception of the crisis, and Lord Dalhousie prepared himself for the conflict. "I have wished for peace," he said, at a public entertainment, early in October; "I have longed for it; I have striven for it. But if the enemies of India determine to have war, war they shall have, and on my word they shall have it with a vengeance." A few days afterwards he turned his back upon Calcutta, and set his face towards the north-west. All the energies of his mind were then given to the prosecution of the war.

The British army destined for the re-conquest of the Panjáb assembled at Firúzpur, and crossed the Satlaj in different detachments. On the 13th of November the head-quarters reached Lahor. At that time it could hardly be said that British influence extended a rood beyond the Residency walls. In all parts of the country the Sikhs had risen against the great reproach of the English occupation. In many outlying places, on the confines of civilisation, our English officers were holding out, in the face of every conceivable difficulty and danger, with constancy and resolution most chivalrous, most heroic, hoping only to maintain, by their own personal gallantry, the character of the nation they represented. There was, indeed, nothing more to be done. We had ceased to be regarded as allies. So eager and so general was the desire to expel the intruding Faringhí, that the followers of Govind sank for a time all feelings of national and religious animosity against their Afghan neigh-

bours, and invoked Muhammadan aid from the regions beyond the passes of the Khaibar.

On the 21st of November, Lord Gough joined the army on the left bank of the Satlaj. A veteran commander, who within the space of a few years had fought more battles in different parts of the world than were crowded into the lives of most living warriors—a general whose uniform good fortune had glossed over his want of forecast and science, and whose repeated successes had silenced criticism—he was now about to engage in military operations greater than those of his antecedent campaigns, with, perhaps, even less knowledge of the country and less consideration of the probable contingencies of the war. But all men had confidence in him. India had been won by a series of military mistakes that would have disgraced an ensign before the examination period, and, perhaps, would not have been won at all if we had infused into our operations more of the pedantry of military science. He was a soldier, and all who fought under him honoured his grey hairs, and loved him for his manly bearing, his fine frank character, and even for the impetuosity which so often entangled his legions in difficulties, and enhanced the cost of the victories he gained.

The arrival of the Commander-in-Chief was the signal for the immediate commencement of hostilities. The force then under his personal command consisted of upwards of twenty thousand men, with nearly a hundred pieces of artillery, and Gough was in no temper for delay. On the day after his arrival in camp was fought the battle of Rámnagar, the first of those disastrous successes which have given so gloomy a character to the campaign. The enemy had a strong masked battery on the other side of the river, and very cleverly contrived to draw the British troops into an ambuscade. The operations of the Commander-in-Chief, commenced with the object of driving a party of the rebels, who were on his side of the Chináb, across the river, had the effect of bringing his cavalry and artillery within reach of these concealed guns; and twenty-eight pieces of ordnance opened upon our advancing columns. The cavalry were ordered to move forward to the attack as soon as an opportunity presented itself. They found an opportunity, and charged a large body of the enemy, the Sikh batteries pouring in their deadly showers all the while. Many fell under the fire of the guns, many under the sabre-cuts of the Sikh swords-

men, many under the withering fire of a body of matchlockmen, who, taking advantage of the nature of the ground, harassed our horsemen sorely. Nothing was gained by our "victory;" but we lost many brave and some good soldiers; and our troops returned to camp weary and dispirited, asking what end they had accomplished, and sighing over the cost.

Some days afterwards a force under General Thackwell was sent out to cross the river, but being scantily supplied with information, and grievously hampered by instructions, it succeeded only in losing a few men and killing several of the enemy. No great object was gained, but great opportunities were sacrificed. The Commander-in-Chief pompously declared that "it had pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe to the British arms the most successful issue to the extensive combinations rendered necessary for the purpose of effecting the passage of the Chináb, the defeat and dispersion of the Sikh force under the insurgent Rajah Shér Singh and the numerous Sikh Sirdars who had the temerity to set at defiance the British power." These "events, so fraught with importance," were to "tend to most momentous results." The results were, that the field of battle was shifted from the banks of the Chináb to the banks of the Jhílam. The enemy, who might have been taken in rear, and whose batteries might have been seized, if Thackwell had been free to carry out the most obvious tactics, escaped with all their guns; and on the 13th of January bore bloody witness to the little they had suffered, by fighting one of the greatest and most sanguinary battles in the whole chronicle of Indian warfare.*

By this time Henry Lawrence had returned to the Panjáb. The news of the outbreak at Multán had reached him in England, whilst still in broken health, and had raised within him an incontrollable desire, at any hazard, to return to his post. He had won his spurs, and he was eager to prove that he was worthy of them, even at the risk of life itself. It has been said that he ought not to have quitted the Panjáb, and that if he had been at Lahor in the spring of 1848, the war would not then have been precipitated by the rebellion of Mulráj, for "any one but a civilian would have foreseen that to send Vans Agnew and Anderson down to Multán at the time

* A critical account of this campaign, based on the most accurate information, is to be found in 'The Decisive Battles of India,' published by Messrs. Allen & Co.—G. B. M.

and in the manner selected was almost sure to produce an ebullition of feeling and violence." But if Lawrence had not gone to England at the time, he would, in all probability, have died; and though he might not have sent the same men to Multán, he would have sent a mission there for the same purpose. "I meant to have sent Arthur Cocks," was his remark to the present writer, when the disastrous news reached us in London. He saw at once that the Multáni revolt was but the prelude to a great national outbreak, and though his friends trembled for his safety and counselled delay, his strong sense of duty to the State overruled all personal considerations, and so he carried back his shattered frame and his inexhaustible energies to the scene of the coming conflict. Leaving London at the end of October, he reached Bombay early in December, and pushing up the Indus with characteristic rapidity of movement, joined the camp of General Whish, before the walls of Multán, two days after the great festival of Christmas.

Calcutta Review.

On the second day of the new year, Whish, reinforced from Bombay, carried the city of Multán. Long and obstinate had been the resistance of the besieged; and now that our storming columns entered the breach, the garrison still, at the bayonet's point, showed the stuff of which they were made. Frightful had been the carnage during the siege. Heaps of mangled bodies about the battered town bore ghastly witness to the terrible effects of the British ordnance. But many yet stood to be shot down or bayoneted in the streets; and the work of the besieging force was yet far from its close. Mulráj was in the citadel with some thousands of his best fighting-men; and the fort guns were plied as vigorously as before the capture of the town. The strength of this formidable fortress seemed to laugh our breaching batteries to scorn. Mining operations were, therefore, commenced; but carried on, as they were, beneath a constant discharge from our mortars, it seemed little likely that the enemy would wait to test the skill of the engineers. The terrible shelling to which the fortress was exposed dismayed the pent-up garrison. By the 21st of January they were reduced to the last extremity. Mulráj vainly endeavoured to rally his followers. Their spirit was broken. There was nothing left for them but to make a desperate sally and cut their way through the besiegers, or to surrender at once. The nobler alternative was rejected. Asking only for his own life

and the honour of his women, Mulráj tendered on that day his submission to the British General. Whish refused to guarantee the first, but promised to protect the women; and on the following morning the garrison marched out of Multán, and Diwán Mulráj threw himself on the mercy of the British Government.

Meanwhile, Henry Lawrence, having witnessed the fall of the city of Multán, hastened upwards to Firúzpúr, conveyed to Lord Dalhousie the first welcome tidings of that event, took counsel with the Governor-General, made himself master of the great man's views, then hurried on to Lahor, communicated with the Resident, and on the same evening pushed on to the camp of the Commander-in-Chief, which he reached on the 10th of January. He was there in no recognised official position, for Currie's tenure of office did not expire until the beginning of the ensuing month; but he was ready for any kind of service, and he placed himself at Lord Gough's disposal, as an honorary aide-de-camp, or any other subordinate officer, in the fine army which was now stretching out before him.

Three days after Lawrence's arrival in camp the battle of Chiliánwála was fought. The time had arrived when a far less impetuous general than Gough might have deemed it incumbent on him to force the Sikh army into a general action. It is true that the final reduction of the fortress of Multán would have liberated a large portion of Whish's column, and greatly have added to the strength of the British army on the banks of the Jhílam. But the Sikh Sirdars, on this very account, were eager to begin the battle, and would not have suffered us to wait for our reinforcements. Gough already had a noble force under him, equal to any service. It was panting for action. There had been a lull of more than a month's duration, and all through India there was a feeling of impatience at the protracted delay. Gough, therefore, prepared for action. Ascertaining the nature of the country occupied by the Sikh army, and the position of their troops, he planned his attack upon sound tactical principles, and fully instructed his generals in the several parts which they were called upon to play. On the afternoon of the 13th everything was ready, and the battle was to have been commenced early on the following morning. But, unwilling to give the British General the long hours of the morrow's light, from daybreak to sunset, that he wanted, to fight his battle according to approved principles of modern warfare, the Sikh leaders, when the day was far spent, determined, if possible, to

aggravate him into an immediate encounter. They knew their man. So they advanced a few guns, and sent some round-shot booming in the direction of the British camp. The bait took. The warm Hibernian temperament of the British leader could not brook the insult. He moved up his heavy guns, responded with some chance shots at the invisible enemy, and then, there being little of the day left for his operations, gave the command for his line to advance.

The story of what followed has been often told, and it is not so gratifying a page of history that I need care to repeat it, Night closed upon the fearful carnage of that terrible engagement, and both armies claimed the victory. What it cost us is written in the Gazette. Never was an official bulletin received in England with a wilder outcry of pain and passion. The past services, the intrepid personal courage, the open honest character, the many noble qualities of the veteran Commander were forgotten in that burst of popular indignation, and hundreds of English families turned from the angry past to the fearful future, and trembled as they thought that the crowning action with that formidable enemy had yet to be fought by a General so rash, so headstrong, and so incompetent.

In the high places of Government there was universal discomposure, and the greatest military authority in the country shook his head with an ominous gesture of reproach. Then arose a wild cry for Napier. The conqueror of the Bilúchis was sent out in hot haste to India to repair the mischief that had been done by Gough, and to finish off the war with the Sikhs in a proper workmanlike manner. But the hottest haste could not wholly annihilate time and space, and though this sudden supersession of the brave old chief, who had fought so many battles and won so many victories, might shame his grey hairs, it could not bring the war to a more rapid or a more honourable close. The carnage of Chiliánwála shook for a time the confidence of the army in their chief, but it did not shake the courage of our fighting-men, or destroy their inherent capacity for conquest. It was a lesson, too, that must have scored itself into the very heart of the British chief, and made him a sadder man and a wiser commander. The errors of the 13th of January were to be atoned for by a victory which any leader might contemplate with pride, and any nation with gratitude. Scarcely had his appointed successor turned his back upon England when Gough fought another great battle,

which neither Napier, nor Wellington himself, who talked of going in his place, could have surpassed in vigour of execution or completeness of effect.

Anxiously was the intelligence of the surrender of Mulráj looked for in the camp of the Commander-in-Chief. Since that disastrous action at Chiliánwála, Gough had been intrenching his position, and waiting reinforcements from Multán. The surrender of that fortress set free some twelve thousand men, and Whish, with unlooked-for rapidity, marched to the banks of the Jhílam to swell the ranks of the grand army. A great crisis was now approaching. Thrice had the British and Sikh forces met each other on the banks of those classical rivers which had seen the triumphs of the Macedonian—thrice had they met each other only to leave the issue of the contest yet undecided. A great battle was now about to be fought—one differing from all that had yet been fought since the Sikhs first crossed the Satlaj, for a strange but not unlooked-for spectacle was about to present itself—Sikhs and Afghans, those old hereditary enemies, fighting side by side against a common foe. The Sikh Sirdars, I have said, had been intriguing to secure the assistance of the Amír of Kábul. For some time there appeared little likelihood that old Dost Muhammad, whose experience ought to have brought wisdom with it, would lend himself to a cause which, in spite of temporary successes, was so sure to prove hopeless in the end. But neither years, nor experience, nor adversity had taught him to profit by the lessons he had learned. The desire of repossessing himself of Peshávar was the madness of a life. The bait was thrown out to him, and he could not resist it. He came through the Khaibar with an Afghan force, marched upon the Indus, and threatened Átak, which fell at his approach; despatched one of his sons to the camp of Shér Singh, and sent a body of Duráni troops to fight against his old Faringhí enemy, who for years had been the arbiter of his fate. How deplorable an act of senile fatuity it was, the events of the 21st of February must have deeply impressed upon his mind. On that day was fought an action—was gained a victory, in the emphatic words of the Governor-General, "memorable alike from the greatness of the occasion, and from the brilliant and decisive issue of the encounter. For the first time, Sikh and Afghan were banded together against the British power. It was an occasion which demanded the putting forth of all the means at our disposal,

and so conspicuous a manifestation of the superiority of our arms as should appal each enemy, and dissolve at once their compact by fatal proof of its futility. The completeness of the victory which has been won equals the highest hopes entertained." And there was no official exaggeration in this; none of the vain boasting of the interested despatch-writer. At Gujrát, to which place the enemy had unexpectedly moved their camp, Lord Gough fought a great battle as a great battle ought to be fought, coolly and deliberately, by a British Commander. Every arm of his fine force was brought effectively into play; each in its proper place, each supporting and assisting the others,and each covering itself with glory. From the early dawn of that clear bright morning the cannonade commenced. Never had the Bengal Artillery made a nobler display; never had it been worked with more terrible effect. Resolute and well handled as was the Sikh army, it could not stand up against the steady fire of our guns. By noon the enemy were retreating in terrible disorder, "their position carried, their guns, ammunition, camp equipage, and baggage captured, their flying masses driven before their victorious pursuers, from mid-day receiving most severe punishment in their flight." And all this was accomplished with but little loss of life on the side of the victorious army. It pleased the Almighty that the bloody lessons of the Chináb and the Jhílam should not be thrown away.

A division under Sir Walter Gilbert, an officer of great personal activity, unequalled in the saddle, was ordered to follow up the successes of Gujrát, and to drive the Afghans from the Panjáb. And well did he justify the choice of his chief. By a series of rapid marches, scarcely excelled by any recorded in history, he convinced the enemy of the hopelessness of all further resistance. The Barukzai force fled before our advancing columns, and secured the passage of the Khaibar before British influence could avail to close it against the fugitives. By the Sikhs themselves the game had clearly been played out. The Khalsa was now quite broken. There was nothing left for Shér Singh and his associates but to trust themselves to the clemency of the British Government. On the 5th of March, the Rajah sent the British prisoners safely into Gilbert's camp. On the 8th, he appeared in person to make arrangements for the surrender of his followers; and on the 14th, the remnant of the Sikh army, some sixteen thousand

men, including thirteen Sirdars of note, laid down their arms at the feet of the British General.

The military chief had now done his work, and it was time for the appearance of the Civil Governor on the scene. Lord Dalhousie was on the spot prepared for immediate action. Already was his portfolio weighty with a proclamation which was to determine the fate of the empire of Ranjít Singh. I do not suppose that a moment's doubt ever obscured the clear, unsullied surface of the Governor-General's resolution. It was a case which suggested no misgivings and prompted no hesitation. The Sikhs had staked everything on the issue of the war, and they had lost it in fair fight. They had repaid by acts of treachery and violence the forbearance and moderation of the British Government. We had tried to spare them; but they would not be spared. First one course, then another, had been adopted in the hope that eventually a strong native Government might be established, able to control its own subjects, and willing to live on terms of friendly alliance with its neighbours. Our policy had from the first been wholly unaggressive. There was no taint of avarice or ambition in it. But it had not been appreciated; it had not been successful. The whole system had collapsed. And now that again a British ruler was called upon to solve the great problem of the Future of the Panjáb, he felt that there was no longer any middle course open to him; that there was but one measure applicable to the crisis that had arisen; and that measure was the annexation of the country to the territories of the British Empire. So a proclamation was issued announcing that the kingdom founded by Ranjít Singh had passed under British rule; and the wisdom and righteousness of the edict few men are disposed to question.

The last Sikh Durbar was held at Lahor. The fiat of the British conqueror was read aloud, in the presence of the young Maharajah, to the remnant of the chiefs who had not committed themselves by open rebellion; and a paper of Terms was then produced by which the British Government bound themselves to pay the annual sum of forty or fifty thousand pounds to the boy-Prince and his family,* so long as he should remain faithful to his new master and abide

March 29, 1849.

* This is not the loose diction of doubt. The agreement was, that the British Government should pay not less than four, or more than five, lakhs of rupees.

by his sovereign will. It was a happy change for Dhulíp Singh, born as he was for the Sikh shambles; for in his new state he had abundant wealth, perfect safety, freedom from all care, and the unsurpassable blessing of a saving faith. Becoming, in his twelfth year, the ward of the Governor-General, he was placed under the immediate tutelage of an Assistant-Surgeon of the Bengal Army,* who was so fit a man for the office, so worthy of the confidence reposed in him, that the little Sikh Prince, under his wise ministrations, developed into a Christian gentleman, an English courtier, and a Scotch laird. And it may be recorded here, before I pass on to the history of British rule in the Panjáb, that the mother of Dhulíp Singh, the widow of old Ranjít, that restless, turbulent Chand Kaur, whose intrigues did so much to precipitate the fall of the Sikh Empire, after a series of strange romantic vicissitudes, prematurely old, well-nigh blind, broken and subdued in spirit, found a resting-place at last under the roof of her son, in a
1863. quiet corner of an English castle, and died in a London suburb.†

1849. Administration of the Panjáb.

The proclamation which turned the Panjáb into a British province was not the only weighty State-paper in the portfolio of the Governor-General. Whilst Gough had been preparing to strike the last crushing blow at the military power of the Khálsa, Dalhousie, with Henry Elliot at his elbow, never doubting the issue, was mapping out the scheme of administration under which it

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* Afterwards Sir John Login.

† In the presence of the subsequent action of Dhulíp Singh, of his abnegation of the Christian faith, and of the position of "an English courtier and a Scotch laird," it is impossible to allow this passage to pass without remark. When Lord Dalhousie annexed the Panjáb Dhulíp Singh was the ward of the British Government. The British troops combated for him, and on his behalf. The rebellion which culminated in the victory of Gujrát was brought about by the incompetence, not of Dhulíp Singh, but of the British officials by whom he was surrounded, notably by that of the acting Resident, Sir F. Currie. It is difficult, then, to see the moral grounds upon which it was decided that Dhulíp Singh should bear the brunt of the punishment. Sir Henry Lawrence could not see them, neither can I. Having annexed his country for no fault of his, mere child as he was, we were bound to assure to him something more than a mere personal provision, to lapse upon his death. I am far from defending the recent action of Dhulíp Singh, but it is most certain that he had a very just cause for discontent.—G. B. M.

seemed good to him to govern the country which was about to pass under our rule. The crowning victory of Gujrát found everything devised and prepared to the minutest detail. The men were ready; the measures were defined. There was no hurry, therefore—no confusion. Every one fell into his appointed place, and knew what he had to do. And never had any Governor better reason to place unbounded confidence in the men whom he employed; never was any Governor more worthily served.

The country which had thus fallen by right of conquest into our hands embraced an area of fifty thousand square miles, and contained a population of four millions of inhabitants. These inhabitants were Hindus, Muhammadans, and Sikhs. The last were a new people—a sect of reformed Hindus, of a purer faith than the followers of the Brahminical superstitions. It was a Sikh Government that we had supplanted; and mainly a Sikh army that we had conquered; but it must not be supposed that Panjábí is synonymous with Sikh, that the country was peopled from one end to the other with the followers of Nának and Govind, or that they were the ancient dwellers on the banks of those five legendary rivers. The cities of the Panjáb were Muhammadan cities; cities founded, perhaps, ere Muhammad arose, enlarged and beautified by the followers of the Ghaznivite. The monuments were mainly Muhammadan monuments, with traces here and there of Grecian occupation and Bactrian rule. Before Dehli had risen into the imperial city of the Mughuls, Lahor had been the home of Indian kings. But the rise of the Sikh power was contemporaneous with our own, and the apostles of the new Reformation had not numbered among their converts more than a section of the people. And as was the population, so was the country itself, of a varied character. Tracts of rich cultivated lands, the cornfield and the rose-garden, alternated with the scorched plain and the sandy desert. Here, as far as the eye could reach, a dreary level of jungle and brushwood; there, a magnificent panorama, bounded by the blue ranges and the snowy peaks of the Himalayah. And ever the great rivers as they flowed suggested to the cultured mind of the English scholar thoughts of that grand old traditionary age, when Porus fought, and Alexander conquered, and Megasthenes wrote, and the home-sick Argive, on the banks of those fabulous streams, sighed for the pleasant country he had left, and rebelled against his leader and his fate. It was a country full of interest and

full of opportunity; and it grew at once into the pet province of the British Viceroy, the youngest and the most hopeful of all.

That a country so situated, so circumstanced, and so peopled, should not be brought under the system of administration prevailing in our long-settled provinces was a mere matter of course. But Dalhousie had no disposition to rush into the opposite extreme of a purely military government. He had at no time of his career any class prejudices, and he did not see why soldiers and civilians should not work harmoniously together in the administrative agency of the province. He had faith in both; each in his appointed place; for there was rough soldiers' work to be done, and much also that needed the calm judgment and the tutored eye of the experienced civilian. So he called in the aid of a mixed Staff of civil and military officers, and at the head of this he placed a Board of Administration, presided over by Henry Lawrence.*

The Board was to consist of three members, with secretaries to do the pen-work of the administration, and to scatter its instructions among the subordinate functionaries of the province. It was not a controlling authority which a man of Dalhousie's stamp was likely to affect; scarcely, indeed, could he be supposed to tolerate it. But he could not set aside the great claims of Henry Lawrence, nor, indeed, could he safely dispense with his services in such a conjuncture; yet he was unwilling to trust to that honest, pure-minded, soldier-statesman the sole direction of affairs. The fact is that, with a refinement of the justice and moderation which were such conspicuous features of Henry's character, he dissented from the policy of annexation. He thought that another effort might have been made to save the Sikh Empire from destruction. Out of this difficulty arose the project of the Board. It was natural that Dalhousie should have desired to associate with one thus minded some other statesman whose views were more in harmony with his own. A Board of two is, under no circumstances, a practicable institution: so a Triumvirate was established. But sentence of death was written down against it from the very hour of its birth.

* Sir Frederick Currie had by this time resumed his seat in the Supreme Council of India.

The second seat at the Board was given to the President's brother, John Lawrence. An officer of the Company's Civil Service, he had achieved a high reputation as an administrator; as one of those hard-working, energetic, conscientious servants of the State, who live ever with the harness on their back, to whom labour is at once a duty and a delight, who do everything in a large unstinting way, the Ironsides of the Public Service. He had taken, in the earlier stages of his career, an active part in the Revenue Settlement of the North-Western Provinces, and had subsequently been appointed Magistrate of the great imperial city of Delhi, with its crowded, turbulent population, and its constant under-current of hostile intrigue. In this post, winning the confidence of men of all classes and all creeds, Lord Hardinge found him when, in 1845, he journeyed upwards to join the army of the Satlaj. There was an openness, a frankness about him that pleased the old soldier, and a large-hearted zeal and courage which proclaimed him a man to be employed in a post of more than common difficulty, beyond the circle of ordinary routine. So, after the campaign on the Satlaj, when the Jálandhar Duáb was taken in part payment of the charges of the war, John Lawrence was appointed to superintend the administration of that tract of country; and on more than one occasion, during the enforced absence of Henry from Lahor, in the first two years of the British Protectorate, he had occupied his brother's seat at the capital, and done his work with unvaried success. That there were great characteristic differences between the two Lawrences will be clearly indicated as I proceed; but in unsullied honesty and intrepid manliness, they were the counterparts of each other. Both were equally without a stain.

The third member of the Lahor Board of Administration was Mr. Charles Grenville Mansel, also a covenanted civilian, who had earned a high reputation as one of the ablest financiers in India, and who supplied much of the knowledge and experience which his colleagues most lacked. His honesty was of as fine a temper as theirs, but he was a man rather of thought than of action, and wanted the constitutional robustness of his associates in office. Perhaps his very peculiarities, rendering him, as it were, the complement of the other two, especially marked him out as the third of that remarkable triumvirate. Regarded as a whole, with reference to the time and circumstances of its creation, the Board could not have been better constituted. It

did honour to the sagacity of Lord Dalhousie, and fully justified the choice of agents he had made.

The system was one of divided labour and common responsibility. On Henry Lawrence devolved what was technically called the "political" work of the Government. The disarming of the country, the negotiations with the chiefs, the organisation of the new Panjábí regiments, the arrangements for the education of the young Maharajah, who had now become the ward of the British Government, were among the immediate duties to which he personally devoted himself; the chief care of John Lawrence was the civil administration, especially the settlement of the Land Revenue; whilst Mansel superintended the general judicial management of the province; each, however, aiding the others with his advice, and having a potential voice in the general Council. Under these chief officers were a number of subordinate administrators of different ranks, drawn partly from the civil and partly from the military service of the Company. The province was divided into seven divisions, and to each of these divisions a Commissioner was appointed. Under each of these Commissioners were certain Deputy-Commissioners, varying in number according to the amount of business to be done; whilst under them again were Assistant-Commissioners and Extra Assistants, drawn from the uncovenanted servants of Government—Europeans, Indo-Britons, or natives of pure descent.

The officers selected for the principal posts under the Lahor Board of administration were the very flower of the Indian services. Dalhousie had thrown his whole heart into the work which lay before him. Resolved that it should not be marred by the inefficiency of his agents, he looked about him for men of mark and likelihood, men in the vigour of their years, men of good performance for the higher posts, and sturdy, eager-spirited youths of good promise for the lower. It mattered not to him whether the good stuff were draped in civil black or military red. Far above all petty prejudices of that kind, the Governor-General swept up his men with an eye only to the work that was in them, and sent them forth to do his bidding. Some had already graduated in Panjábí administration under the Protectorate; others crossed the Satlaj for the first time with honours taken under Thomason and his predecessors in the North-West Provinces. And among them were such men as George Edmonstone, Donald Macleod, and Robert Montgomery

from the one service; Frederick Mackeson and George Macgregor from the other; such men, besides those already named,* as Richard Temple, Edward Thornton, Neville Chamberlain, George Barnes, Lewin Bowring, Philip Goldney, and Charles Saunders; soldiers and civilians working side by side, without a feeling of class jealousy, in the great work of reconstructing the administration of the Panjáb and carrying out the executive details; whilst at the head of the department of Public Works was Robert Napier, in whom the soldier and the man of science met together to make one of the finest Engineer officers in the world.

They found much to do, but little to undo. The Government of Ranjít Singh had been of a rude, simple, elementary character; out of all rule; informal; unconstitutional; unprincipled! one great despotism and a number of petty despotisms; according to our English notions, reeking with the most "frightful injustice." But somehow or other it had answered the purpose. The injustice was intelligible injustice, for it was simply that of the strong will and the strong hand crushed down in turn by one still stronger. Petty governors, revenue-farmers, or kardars, might oppress the people and defraud the State, but they knew that, sooner or later, a day of reckoning would come when their accounts would be audited by the process of compulsory disgorgement, or in some parts of the country settled in the noose of the proconsular gibbet. No niceties of conscience and no intricacies of law opposed an obstacle to these summary adjustments. During the existence of that great fiction, the Council of Regency, we had begun to systematise and to complicate affairs; and as we had found—at least, as far as we understood the matter—a clear field for our experiments, we now, on assuming undisguisedly the administration of the country, had a certain basis of our own to operate upon, and little or nothing to clear away.

The system of administration now introduced into the Panjáb, formal and precise as it may have been when compared with the rude simplicity of the old Sikh Government, was loose and irregular in comparison with the strict procedure of the Regulation Provinces. The administrators, whether

* *Ante*, p. 12. I have here named only those distinguished during the earlier deriod of our Panjábí career. Others there were, appointed at a later period, equally entitled to honourable mention.

soldiers or civilians, were limited to the discharge of no particular departmental functions. They were judges, revenue-collectors, thief-catchers, diplomatists, conservancy officers, and sometimes recruiting serjeants and chaplains, all in one. Men trained in such a school as this, and under such masters as the Lawrences, became equal to any fortune, and in no conjuncture, however critical, were ever likely to fail. There was hardly one among them who did not throw his whole heart into his work; who ever thought of ease, or leisure, or any personal enjoyment beyond that which comes from an honest sense of duty done. They lived among the people of the country, their tents open to all the points of the compass; * and won by their personal bearing the confidence and the admiration of all who came within their reach.

And so, far sooner than even sanguine men ventured to predict, the Panjáb began to settle down under its new rulers. Even the old Khálsa fighting-men accepted their position, and with a manly resignation looking cheerfully at the inevitable, confessed that they had been beaten in fair fight, and submitted themselves to the English conqueror. Some were enlisted into the new Panjábí Irregular Regiments, which were raised for the internal defence of the province. Others betook themselves, with the pensions or gratuities which were bestowed upon them, to their fields, and merged themselves into the agricultural population. There was no fear of any resurrection of the old national cause. For whilst the people were forced to surrender all their weapons of war—their guns, their muskets, their bayonets, their sabres, their spears—the whole province was bristling with British arms. An immense

* Sir John Malcolm used to say that the only way to govern the people of a newly-acquired country was by means of *char durwaseh kolah*, or four doors open. That the Panjabi officials well understood this, here is a pleasant illustrative proof, from a paper written by one of them:—"For eight months in the year the tent is the proper home of him who loves his duties and his people. Thus he comes to know and be known of them; thus personal influence and local knowledge give him a power not to be won by bribes or upheld by bayonets. The notables of the neighbourhood meet their friend and ruler on his morning march; greybeards throng round his unguarded door with presents of the best fruits of the land, or a little sugar, spices, and almonds, according to the fashion of their country, and are never so happy as when allowed to seat themselves on the carpet and talk over old times and new events—the promise of the harvest and the last orders of the rulers."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. xxxiii.

military force was maintained in the Panjáb. It was a happy circumstance that, as the Indus had now become our boundary and the country of the Sikhs our frontier province, it was necessary for purposes of external defence, after the apparent settling down of our newly-acquired territories, still to keep our regular troops, European and native, at a strength more than sufficient to render utterly harmless all the turbulent elements of Panjábí society. Had the British army been withdrawn from the Panjáb, as at a latter period it was from Oudh, it is hard to say what might not have resulted from our confidence and incaution.

On the acquisition of a new country and the extinction of an old dynasty, it has commonly happened that the chief sufferers by the revolution have been found among the aristocracy of the land. The great masses of the people have been considerately, indeed generously treated, but the upper classes have been commonly prostrated by the annexing hand, and have never recovered from the blow. This may be partly attributed to what is so often described as the "inevitable tendency" of such a change from a bad to a good government. It has been assumed that the men whom we have found in the enjoyment of all the privileges of wealth and social position, have risen to this eminence by spoliation and fraud, and maintained it by cruelty and oppression. And it is true that the antecedents of many of them would not bear a very jealous scrutiny. Now, so far as the substitution of a strong and pure for a weak and corrupt government must necessarily have checked the prosperous career of those who were living on illicit gains and tyrannous exactions, it was, doubtless, the inevitable tendency of the change to injure, if not to ruin them, as the leaf must perish when the stem dies. But it must be admitted that for some years past the idea of a native aristocracy had been an abomination in the eyes of English statesmen in India; that we had desired to see nothing between the Sarkar, or Government, and the great masses of the people; and that, however little we might have designed it, we had done some great wrongs to men, whose misfortune, rather than whose fault, it was that they wei the growth of a corrupt system. There was at the bottom of this a strong desire for the welfare of the people—an eager and a generous longing to protect the weak against the tyranny of the strong; but benevolence, like ambition, sometimes overleaps itself, and falls prostrate on the

other side, and out of our very love of justice come sometimes unjust deeds.

To the great chiefs of the Panjáb the annexation of the country to the British Empire was a source of sore disquietude.* Mercy to the vanquished in the hour of victory was not one of the weaknesses they had been accustomed to contemplate. They had played for a great stake, and they had lost. They had brought their losses on themselves. They had invited by their own acts the conflict which had ruined them. In no one instance had our policy been aggressive. We had not coveted the possession of the Panjáb. We had not invited either the first or the second great conflict between the British and the Sikh armies. A brave nation fighting for its independence is one of the noblest spectacles of humanity; and the leaders of such a movement have just claim to sympathy and respect. But these men had risen against us whilst they pretended to be our friends. They had soiled their patriotism by treachery, and forfeited their honour by falsehood and deceit. Still, to a man of large mind and catholic spirit like Henry Lawrence, it could not seem right to judge these Sirdars as he would the flower of European chivalry. So he dealt gently with their offences; and when he came to consider their position under the new Government, he respected their fallen fortunes, and laid a lighter hand upon their tenures than higher authority was altogether willing to sanction. That a large portion of the revenue would be alienated by grants to military chiefs and to priestly sinecurists was certain; not less certain did it appear that the money might be better bestowed. Still, it might be politic, even in a financial aspect, to tolerate for a time abuses of this kind, as not the most expensive means of reconciling the influential classes to our rule. Thus argued Henry Lawrence. So these privileged classes received from him, in many instances, though not all that he wished to give, more perhaps

* This was admitted in the first Panjáb Report, the following passage of which may be advantageously quoted:—"A great revolution cannot happen without injuring some classes. When a State falls, its nobility and its supporters must to some extent suffer with it; a dominant sect and party once moved by political ambition and religious enthusiasm, cannot return to the ordinary level of society and the common occupations of life without feeling some discontent and some enmity against their powerful but humane conquerors. But it is probable that the mass of the people will advance in material prosperity and in moral elevation under the influence of British rule."

than they had dared to expect. Existing incumbents were generally respected; and the privileges enjoyed by one generation were to be only partially resumed in the next.

Thus, by a well-apportioned mixture of vigour and clemency, the submission, if not the acquiescence, of the more dangerous classes was secured; and our administrators were left, undisturbed by the fear of internal revolt, to prosecute their ameliorative measures. It would be beyond the scope of such a narrative as this to write in detail of the operations which were carried out, under the Lahor Board, at once to render British rule a blessing to the people, and the possession of the Panjáb an element of strength and security to the British Empire. These great victories of peace are reserved for others to record. That the measures were excellent, that the men were even better than the measures, that the administration of the Panjáb was a great fact, at which Englishmen pointed with pride and on which foreigners dwelt with commendation, is freely admitted, even by those who are not wont to see much that is good in the achievements of the British Government in India. Under the fostering care of the Governor-General, who traversed the country from one end to the other, and saw everything with his own eyes, the "Panjáb system" became the fashion, and men came to speak and to write of it as though it were a great experiment in government originated by Lord Dalhousie. But it was not a new system. It had been tried long years before, with marked success, and was still in force in other parts of India, though it had never been carried out on so large a scale, or in so fine a country, or been the darling of a viceroy. The only novelty in the construction of the administration was the Lahor Board, and that was abandoned as a failure.

I do not say that it *was* a failure; but it was so regarded by Lord Dalhousie, who, in 1853, remorselessly signed its death-warrant. A delicate operation, indeed, was the breaking up of the Panjábí Cabinet and the erection of an autocracy in its place. It was the will of the Governor-General that the chief direction of affairs should be consigned to the hands, not of many, but of one. And when the rumour of this resolution went abroad, there was scarcely a house, or a bungalow, or a single-poled tent occupied by an English officer, in which the future of the Panjáb—the question of the Lawrences—was not eagerly discussed. Was Henry or was John Lawrence to remain supreme director of affairs? So much was to be said in favour

of the great qualities of each brother, that it was difficult to arrive at any anticipatory solution of the question. But it was in the character of the Governor-General himself that the key to the difficulty should have been sought. Lord Hardinge would have chosen Henry Lawrence. Lord Dalhousie chose John. No surprise is now expressed that it was so; for, in these days, the character and policy of Dalhousie are read by the broad light of history. No regret is now felt that it was so; for, when the great hurricane of which I am about to write swept over India, each of those two great brothers was, by God's providence, found in his right place. But there were many at the time who grieved that the name of Henry Lawrence, who had been for so many years associated with all their thoughts of British influence in the Sikh country, and who had paved the way to all our after successes, was to be expunged from the list of Panjábí administrators. It was said that he sympathised overmuch with the fallen state of Sikhdom, and sacrificed the revenue to an idea; that he was too eager to provide for those who suffered by our usurpation; whilst Dalhousie, deeming that the balance-sheet would be regarded as the great test and touchstone of success, was eager to make the Panjáb pay. John Lawrence, it was said, better understood the art of raising a revenue. He was willing, in his good brotherly heart, to withdraw from the scene in favour of Henry; but the Governor-General needed his services. So he was appointed Chief-Commissioner of the Panjáb, and a new theatre was found for the exercise of Henry Lawrence's more chivalrous benevolence among the ancient states of Rájpútána.

Outwardly, authoritatively, and not untruthfully, the explanation was, that the work of the soldier-statesman was done, that the transition-period in which Henry Lawrence's services were so especially needed had passed; that the business of internal administration was principally such as comes within the range of the civil officer's duties; and that a civilian with large experience, especially in revenue matters, was needed to direct all the numerous details of the Executive Government. Dalhousie never liked the Board. It was not a description of administrative agency likely to find favour in his eyes; and it is not impossible that he placed, with some reluctance, at the head of it a man who had not approved the original policy of annexation. But he could not have read Henry Lawrence's character so badly as to believe for a moment that, on that

account, the policy once accomplished, he could have been less eager for its success, or less zealous in working it out. There was the indication, however, of a fundamental difference of opinion, which as time advanced became more and more apparent, for Henry's generous treatment of his fallen enemies came from that very source of enlarged sympathy which rendered the policy of annexation distasteful to him. It was natural, therefore, that the Governor-General, who had resolved to rid himself of the Board on the first fitting opportunity, should have selected as the agent of his pet policy, the administrator of his pet province, the civilian who concurred with, rather than the soldier who dissented from, his views. The fitting opportunity came at last, for there was a redistribution of some of the higher political offices;* and Dalhousie then swept away the obnoxious institution, and placed the administration of the Panjáb in the hands of a single man.

Henry Lawrence bowed to the decision, but was not reconciled to it. He betook himself to his new duties a sadder and a wiser man. He did not slacken in good service to the State; but he never again had the same zest for his work. Believing that he had been unfairly and ungratefully treated, he had no longer his old confidence in his master, and as the Dalhousie policy developed itself, under the ripening influence of time, he saw more clearly that he was not one to find favour in the eyes of the Governor-General. Much that he had before but dimly seen and partly understood now became fully revealed to him in the clear light of day. Once, and once only, there was any official conflict; but Henry Lawrence saw much that whilst he deplored he could not avert, and he sighed to think that his principles were out of date and his politics out of fashion.

In the meanwhile, John Lawrence reigned in the Panjáb. The capacity for administration, which he had evinced as a Member of the Board, had now free scope for exercise, and was soon fully developed. His name became great throughout the land, and he deserved the praise that was lavished upon him. Right or wrong he did all in accordance with the faith that was

* The Haidarábád Residency was about to be vacated. It was an office that had been held by Sir Charles Metcalfe and other eminent men. I believe that Henry Lawrence suggested (for the days of the Board had been for some time numbered) that either he or his brother should be sent to Haidarábád. Lord Dalhousie, however, sent General Low to the Court of the Nizam, and gave Henry Lawrence the scarcely less honourable appointment of Governor-General's agent in Rájpútána.

in him. He was a fitting agent of Dalhousie's policy, only because he believed in that policy. And happily the greater part of his work lay along the straight road of undebatable beneficence. How he worked, day after day, early and late, and how all men worked under him, is a history now well known. He was emphatically a man without a weakness. Strong himself, bone and muscle, head and heart, of adamantine strength, that would neither bend nor break, he expected others to be equally strong. They sighed, perhaps they inwardly protested, but they knew that the work he exacted from them he gave, in his own person, unstintingly to the State; and they could not regard as a hard task-master one who tasked himself hardest of all. From moral infirmities of all kinds he appeared to be equally free. He did not even seem to be ambitious. Men said that he had no sentiment, no romance. We so often judge our neighbours wrongly in this, that I hesitate to adopt the opinion; but there was an intense reality about him such as I have never seen equalled. He seemed to be continually toiling onwards, upwards, as if life were not meant for repose, with the grand princely motto, "*I serve*," inscribed in characters of light on his forehead. He served God as unceasingly as he served the State; and set before all his countrymen in the Panjáb the true pattern of a Christian gentleman.

And it was not thrown away. The Christian character of the British administration in the Panjáb has ever been one of its most distinguishing features. It is not merely that great humanising measures were pushed forward with an alacrity most honourable to a Christian nation—that the moral elevation of the people was continually in the thoughts of our administrators; but that in their own personal characters they sought to illustrate the religion which they professed. Wherever two or three were gathered together, the voice of praise and prayer went up from the white man's tent. It had been so during the Protectorate, when, in the wildest regions and in the most stirring times, men like the Lawrences, Reynell Taylor, and Herbert Edwardes, never forgot the Christian Sabbath.* And

* Many will remember that delightful little story, so pleasantly told in Edwardes's "Year on the Panjáb frontier," of Reynell Taylor's invitation to prayer on a Sunday morning in February, 1848, and of the question whether the half-caste colonel, "John Holmes," who had "always attended prayers at Peshâwar" in George Lawrence's house, was sufficiently a Christian to be admitted to swell the two or three into three or four.

now that peace and order reigned over the country, Christianity asserted itself more demonstratively, and Christian churches rose at our bidding. There was little or none, too, of that great scandal which had made our names a hissing and a reproach in Afghanistan. Our English officers, for the most part, lived pure lives in that heathen land; and private immorality under the administration of John Lawrence grew into a grave public offence.

And so the Panjáb administration flourished under the Chief-Commissioner and his assistants;* and the active mind of Lord Dalhousie was enabled to direct itself to new objects. Already, far down on the south-eastern boundary of our empire—at the point farthest removed of all from the great country whose destinies we have been considering—the seeds of war had been sown broad-cast. Ever since 1826, when the first contest with Ava had been brought to a close by the surrender to the English of certain tracts of country in which no Englishman could live, our relations with the Burmese had been on an unsatisfactory footing. In truth, they were altogether a very unsatisfactory people; arrogant and pretentious, blind to reason, and by no means anxious to manifest their appreciation of the nice courtesies of diplomatic intercourse. To find just cause, according to European notions for chastising these people would at any time have been easy. But their insolence did us very little harm. We could tolerate, without loss of credit or of prestige, the discourtesies of a barbarian Government on the outskirts of civilisation. An insult on the banks of the Irawádí was very different from an insult on the banks of the Jamná. The Princes and chiefs of India knew nothing and cared nothing about our doings far out beyond the black waters of the Bay of Bengal. But at last these discourtesies culminated in an outrage which Lord Dalhousie thought it became the British Government to resent. Whether, under more discreet management, redress might have been obtained and war averted, it is now of little moment to inquire. A sea-captain was appointed to conduct our diplomacy at Rangún, and he conducted it successfully to a rupture. A

Conquest of Pegu.

* On the abolition of the Board, Mr. Montgomery, who had succeeded Mr. Mansel as third member, became Judicial Commissioner, and Mr. Macleod was appointed Financial Commissioner.

war ensued, to which the future historian of India may devote a not very inviting chapter, but its details have nothing to do with the story of this book. English arms were triumphant, and the province of Pegu lay at our feet. Dalhousie annexed it to the British Empire, "in order that the Government of India might hold from the Burmese State both adequate compensation for past injury, and the best security against future danger." Thus did the British Empire, which had so recently been extended to the north-west, stretch itself out to the south-east; and the white man sat himself down on the banks of the Irawádí as he had seated himself on the banks of the Indus. There were not wanting those who predicted that the whole of Burmah would soon become British territory, and that then the "uncontrollable principle," by reference to which a great English statesman justified the seizure of Sindh, would send the English conqueror to grope his way through the Shan States and Siam to Cochin-China. But these apprehensions were groundless. The administrator began his work in Pegu, as he had begun his work in the Panjáb, and there was no looking beyond the frontier; but, on the other hand, a desire to avoid border disputes, or, if they could not be avoided, to treat them as matters of light account, inevitable and soon to be forgotten. There was a military officer, admirably fitted for the work, who had served long and successfully, as a civil administrator, in Árakán; who knew the Burmese language and the Burmese people, and had a great name along the eastern coast. Those isolated regions beyond the Bay of Bengal are the grave of all catholic fame. Whilst the name of Lawrence was in all men's mouths, Phayre was pursuing the even tenor of his way, content with a merely local reputation. But the first, and as I write the only commissioner of Pegu, is fairly entitled to a place in the very foremost rank of those English administrators who have striven to make our rule a blessing to the people of India, and have not failed in the attempt.

In India the native mind readily pervades vast distances, and takes little account of space that the foot can travel. But it is bewildered and confused by the thought of the "black water." The unknown is the illimitable. On the continent of India, therefore, neither our war-successes nor our peace-successes in the Burmese country stirred the heart of Indian society. In the lines of the Sipáhi and the shops of the money-changer they were not matters of eager interest and voluble discourse. We

might have sacked the cities of Ava and Amarapúra, and caused their sovereign lord to be trodden to death by one of his white elephants without exciting half the interest engendered by a petty outbreak in Central India, or the capture of a small fort in Bundelkhand. The Princes and chiefs of the great continent of Hindostan knew little and cared less about a potentate, however magnificent in his own dominions, who neither worshipped their gods nor spoke their language, and who was cut off from their brotherhood by the intervention of the great dark sea. We gained no honour, and we lost no confidence, by the annexation of this outlying province; but it opened to our Native Soldiery a new field of service, and unfortunately it was beyond the seas.

CHAPTER II.

So, three years after his arrival in India, Dalhousie had brought to a close two great military campaigns, and had captured two great provinces. He had then done with foreign wars; his after career was one of peaceful invasion. Ere long there was a word which came to be more dreaded than that of Conquest. The native mind is readily convinced by the inexorable logic of the sword. There is no appeal from such arbitration. To be invaded and to be conquered is a state of things appreciable by the inhabitant of India. It is his "kismat;" his fate; God's will. One stronger than he cometh and taketh all that he hath. There are, however, manifest compensations. His religion is not invaded; his institutions are not violated. Life is short, and the weak man, patient and philosophical, is strong to endure and mighty to wait. But LAPSE is a dreadful and an appalling word; for it pursues the victim beyond the grave. Its significance in his eyes is nothing short of eternal condemnation.

"The son," says the great Hindu lawgiver, "delivers his father from the hell called Pat." There are, he tells us, different kinds of sons; there is the son begotten; the son given; the son by adoption; and other filial varieties. It is the duty of the son to perform the funeral obsequies of the father. If they be not performed, it is believed that there is no resurrection to eternal bliss. The right of adoption is, therefore, one of the most cherished doctrines of Hinduism. In a country where polygamy is the rule, it might be supposed that the necessity of adopting another man's offspring, for the sake of these ceremonial ministrations, or for the continuance of an ancestral name, would be one of rare occurrence. But all theory on the subject is belied by the fact that the Princes and chiefs of India more frequently find themselves, at the close of their lives, without the solace of male offspring than with it. The Zenana

is not an institution calculated to lengthen out a direct line of Princes. The alternative of adoption is one, therefore, to which there is frequent resort; it is a source of unspeakable comfort in life and in death; and politically it is as dear to the heart of a nation as it is personally to the individual it affects.

It is with the question of Adoption only in its political aspects that I have to do in this place. There is a private and personal, as there is a public and political, side to it. No power on earth beyond a man's own will can prevent him from adopting a son, or can render that adoption illegal if it be legally performed. But to adopt a son as a successor to private property is one thing, to adopt an heir to titular dignities and territorial sovereignty is another. Without the consent of the Paramount State no adoption of the latter kind can be valid. Whether in this case of a titular Prince or a possessor of territorial rights, dependent upon the will of the Government, Hinduism is satisfied by the private adoption and the penalties of the sonless state averted, is a question for the pundits to determine; but no titular chief thinks the adoption complete unless he can thereby transmit his name, his dignities, his rights and privileges to his successor, and it can in no wise be said that the son takes the place of his adoptive father if he does not inherit the most cherished parts of that father's possessions.

Satárah.

But whether the religious element does or does not rightly enter into the question of political adoptions, nothing is more certain than that the right, in this larger political sense, was ever dearly prized by the Hindus, and was not alienated from them by the Lords-Paramount who had preceded us. The imperial recognition was required, and it was commonly paid for by a heavy "nazarána," or succession-duty, but in this the Mughul rulers were tolerant. It was reserved for the British to substitute for the right of adoption what was called "the right of lapse," and in default of male heirs of the body lawfully begotten to absorb native principalities into the great amalgam of our British possessions. "In 1849," wrote Lord Dalhousie, in his elaborate farewell minute, "the principality of Satárah was included in the British dominions by right of lapse, the Rajah having died without male heir." The Princes of Satárah were the descendants of Sivaji, the founder and the head of the Maráthá Empire. Their power and their glory had alike departed. But they were still great in tradition, and

were looked up to with respect by the Maráthás of Western India. In April, 1848, the last Rajah died; * and a question arose as to whether, no direct male heir of the body having been left by the deceased, a son by adoption, or a collateral member of the family, should be permitted to succeed him, or whether the rights and titles of the principality should be declared to be extinct. Sir George Clerk was then Governor of Bombay. He looked at the Treaty of 1819; saw that "the British Government agreed to cede in perpetual sovereignty to the Rajah of Satárah, his heirs and successors," the territories which he had held, and at once declared himself in favour of the continuance of the native Ráj. The members of his Council looked upon the question as purely one of expediency, and considered it the duty of the British Government to decide it in the manner most advantageous to ourselves. But the Governor refused to admit any secondary considerations, saying, "If it be inconsistent with justice to refuse confirmation to the act of adoption, it is useless to inquire whether it is better for the interests of the people or of the empire at large to govern the Satárah territories through the medium of a native Rajah, or by means of our own administration." The trumpet of that statesman was not likely to give an uncertain sound.

When this question first arose, the Governor-General was in his novitiate. But new as he was to the consideration of such subjects, he does not appear to have faltered or hesitated. The opinions, the practical expression of which came subsequently to be called the "policy of annexation," were formed at the very outset of his career, and rigidly maintained to its close. Eight months after his first assumption of the Government of India, he placed on record a confession of faith elicited by this agitation of the Satárah question. Subsequent events of far greater magnitude dwarfed that question in the public mind, and later utterances of the great minute-writer caused this first manifesto to be comparatively forgotten; but a peculiar interest must ever be associated with this earliest exposition of Dalhousie's political creed, and therefore I give it in the words of the

* Appa S[...]
and, as I think, very rightly, on account of a series of intrigues against the British Government, equally foolish and discreditable. It is worthy of remark, that Sir Robert Grant, being satisfied of the Rajah's guilt, proposed to punish him in the manner least likely to be advantageous to ourselves.

statesman himself: "The Government," he wrote on the 30th August, 1848, "is bound in duty, as well as policy, to act on every such occasion with the purest integrity, and in the most scrupulous observance of good faith. Where even a shadow of doubt can be shown, the claim should at once be abandoned. But where the right to territory by lapse is clear, the Government is bound to take that which is justly and legally its due, and to extend to that territory the benefits of our sovereignty, present and prospective. In like manner, while I would not seek to lay down any inflexible rule with respect to adoption, I hold that, on all occasions, where heirs natural shall fail, the territory should be made to lapse, and adoption should not be permitted, excepting in those cases in which some strong political reason may render it expedient to depart from this general rule. There may be conflict of opinion as to the advantage or the propriety of extending our already vast possessions beyond their present limits. No man can more sincerely deprecate than I do any extension of the frontiers of our territory which can be avoided, or which may not become indispensably necessary from considerations of our own safety, and of the maintenance of the tranquillity of our provinces. But I cannot conceive it possible for any one to dispute the policy of taking advantage of every just opportunity which presents itself for consolidating the territories that already belong to us, by taking possession of States that may lapse in the midst of them; for thus getting rid of these petty intervening principalities, which may be made a means of annoyance, but which can never, I venture to think, be a source of strength, for adding to the resources of the public Treasury, and for extending the uniform application of our system of government to those whose best interests we sincerely believe will be promoted thereby. Such is the general principle that, in our humble opinion, ought to guide the conduct of the British Government in its disposal of independent States, where there has been a total failure of heirs whatsoever, or where permission is asked to continue by adoption a succession which fails in the natural line."

The Court of Directors of the East India Company confirmed the decision of the Governor-General, and Satárah was annexed. There were men, however, in the Direction who protested against the measure as an act of unrighteous usurpation. "We are called upon," said Mr. Tucker, ever an opponent of wrong, "to consider and decide upon a claim of right, and I have

always felt that our best policy is that which most closely adheres to the dictates of justice." "We ought not to forget," said Mr. Shepherd, who, on great questions of this kind, was commonly to be found side by side with his veteran friend, contending for the rights of the native Princes of India, "that during the rise and progress of our empire in the East, our Governments have continued to announce and proclaim to the people of India that not only should all their rights and privileges which existed under preceding Governments be preserved and maintained, but that their laws, habits, customs, and prejudices should be respected."* And what right more cherished, what custom more honoured, than the right and custom of adoption? But the majority of the Court of Directors supported the views of the Governor-General. They had heard the voice of the charmer. And from that time the policy of Dalhousie became the policy of Leadenhall-street, and the "Right of Lapse" was formally acknowledged.

Nágpúr.

And it was not, for reasons which I have already given, likely long to remain a dead letter. Soon another of the great Maráthá chiefs was said to be dying, and in a few days news came to Calcutta that he was dead. It was the height of the cold season of 1853—a few days before Christmas—when the slow booming of minute guns from the Saluting Battery of Fort William announced the death of Rágují Bhonslá, Rajah of Nágpúr. At the age of forty-seven he succumbed to a complication of disorders, of which debauchery, cowardice, and obstinacy were the chief. There have been worse specimens of royalty, both in Eastern and Western Palaces, than this poor, worn-out, impotent sot; for although he was immoderately addicted to brandy and dancing-girls, he rather liked his people to be happy, and was not incapable of kindness that caused no trouble to himself. He had no son to succeed him; a posthumous son was an impossibility; and he had not adopted an heir.

It may seem strange and contradictory that if the right of adoption as sanctioned by religion and prescribed by ancestral usage be so dear to the people of India, they should ever fail to adopt in default of heirs of their body. But we know that they often do; and the omission is readily explicable by a reference

* Colonel Oliphant and Mr. Leslie Melville recorded minutes on the same side.

to the ordinary weaknesses of humanity. We know that even in this country, with all the lights of civilisation and Christianity to keep us from going astray, thousands of reasoning creatures are restrained from making their wills by a vague feeling of apprehension that there is something "unlucky" in such a procedure; that death will come the sooner for such a provision against its inevitable occurrence. What wonder, then, that in a country which is the very hotbed of superstition, men should be restrained by a kindred feeling from providing against the event of their dissolution? But in this case there is not only the hope of life, but the hope of offspring, to cause the postponement of the anticipatory ceremony. Men, under the most discouraging circumstances, still cling to the belief that by some favourable reaction of nature they may, even when stricken in years, beget an heir to their titles and possessions. In this sense, too, adoption is held to be unlucky, because it is irreligious. It is like a surrender of all hope, and a betrayal of want of faith in the power and goodness of the Almighty. No man expects to beget a son after he has adopted one.

In the case, too, of this Maráthá Prince, there were special reasons why he should have abstained from making such a provision for the continuance of his House. According to the law and usage of his country, an adoption by his widow would have been as valid as an adoption by himself. It was natural, therefore, and assuredly it was in accordance with the character of the man, who was gormandising and dallying with the hand of death upon him, that he should have left the ceremony to be performed by others, Whether it was thus vicariously performed is not very clearly ascertainable. But it is certain that the British Resident reported that there had been no adoption. The Resident was Mr. Mansel, who had been one of the first members of the Lahor Board of Administration—a man with a keen sense of justice, favourable to the maintenance of native dynasties, and therefore, in those days, held to be crotchety and unsound. He had several times pressed the Rajah on the subject of adoption, but had elicited no satisfactory response. He reported unequivocally that nothing had been done, and asked for the instructions of the Supreme Government.

Lord Dalhousie was then absent from Calcutta. He was making one of his cold-weather tours of inspection—seeing with his own eyes the outlying province of Pegu, which had fallen by right of conquest into his hands. The Council, in his

absence, hesitated to act, and all the instructions, therefore, which they could send were to the effect that the Resident should provide for the peace of the country, and keep things quiet until further orders. There was no doubt about Dalhousie's decision in such a case. Had the Rajah adopted a son, there was little likelihood of the Governor-General's sanction of the adoption; but as he had wilfully failed to perform the ceremony, it appeared to be as clear as noon-day that the great organ of the Paramount State would pronounce the fatal sentence of Lapse.

Dalhousie returned to Calcutta, and with characteristic energy addressed himself to the mastery of the whole question. Before the first month of the new year had worn to a close, he attached his signature to an elaborate minute, in which he exhausted all the arguments which could be adduced in favour of the annexation of the country. Printed at full length, it would occupy fifty pages of this book. It was distinguished by infinite research and unrivalled powers of special pleading. It contended that there had been no adoption, and that if there had been, it would be the duty of the British Government to refuse to recognise it. "I am well aware," he said, "that the continuance of the Ráj of Nágpúr under some Maráthá rule, as an act of grace and favour on the part of the British Government, would be highly acceptable to native sovereigns and nobles in India; and there are, doubtless, many of high authority who would advocate the policy on that special ground. I understand the sentiment and respect it; but remembering the responsibility that is upon me, I cannot bring my judgment to admit that a kind and generous sentiment should outweigh a just and prudent policy."

Jan. 28, 1854.

Among the members of the Supreme Council at that time was Colonel John Low. An old officer of the Madras army, who long years before, when the Peshwá and the Bhonslá were in arms against the British, had sate at the feet of John Malcolm, and had graduated in diplomacy under him: he had never forgotten the lessons which he had learnt from his beloved chief; he had never ceased to cherish those "kind and generous sentiments" of which the Governor-General had spoken in his minute. His whole life had been spent at the Courts of the native Princes of India. He had represented British interests long and faithfully at the profligate Court of Lakhnao. He had contended with the pride, the obstinacy, and the superstition of the effete

Princes of Rájputána. He had played, and won, a difficult game, with the bankrupt State of Haidarábád. He knew what were the vices of Indian Princes and the evils of native misrule. But he had not so learnt the lesson presented to him by the spectacle of improvident rulers and profligate Courts; of responsibilities ignored and opportunities wasted; as to believe it to be either the duty or the policy of the Paramount Government to seek "just occasions" for converting every misgoverned principality into a British province. Nor had he, knowing as he did, better perhaps than any of his countrymen, the real character of such misgovernment, ever cherished the conviction that the inhabitants of every native State were yearning for the blessings of this conversion. There were few such States left—Hindu or Muhammadan—but what remained from the wreck of Indian dynasties he believed it to be equally just and politic to preserve. And entertaining these opinions he spoke them out; not arrogantly or offensively, but with what I believe may be described as the calm resolution of despair. He knew that he might speak with the tongue of angels, and yet that his speech would no more affect the practical result than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. "What am I against so many? he said; nay, what am I against one? Who will listen to the utterance of my ideas when opposed to the "deliberately-formed opinion of a statesman like the Marquis of Dalhousie, in whose well-proved ability and judgment and integrity of purpose they have entire confidence?"* But great statesmen in times past had thought that the extension of British rule in India was, for our own sakes, to be arrested rather than accelerated; that the native States were a source to us of strength rather than of weakness, and that it would go ill with us when there were none left.†

Strong in this belief, Colonel Low recorded two minutes, pro-

* Minute of Colonel John Low. February 10, 1854.

† "If Great Britain shall retain her present powerful position among the States of Europe, it seems highly probable that, owing to the infringement of their treaties on the part of native Princes and other causes, the whole of India will, in the course of time, become one British province; but many eminent statesmen have been of opinion that we ought most carefully to avoid unnecessarily accelerating the arrival of that great change; and it is within my own knowledge that the following five great men were of that number—namely, Lord Hastings, Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, and Lord Metcalfe."—*Minute, Feb.* 10, 1854.

testing against the impolicy and the injustice of the proposed annexation of Nágpúr. He said that already the annexation of Satárah had in many parts of India had a bad moral effect; * that it had shaken the confidence of the people in the justice and good faith of the British Government; that people had asked what crime Satárah had committed that sentence of political death should thus have been pronounced against it; that throughout India acquisition by conquest was well understood, and in many cases admitted to be right; that the annexation of the Panjáb, for example, had not been regarded as a wrong, because the chiefs and people had brought it on themselves, but that the extinction of a loyal native State, in default of heirs, was not appreciable in any part of India, and that the exercise of the alleged right of lapse would create a common feeling of uncertainty and distrust at every Durbar in the country. He dwelt upon the levelling effects of British dominion, and urged that, as in our own provinces, the upper classes were invariably trodden down, it was sound policy to maintain the native States, if only as a means of providing an outlet for the energies of men of good birth and aspiring natures, who could never rise under British rule. He contended that our system of administration might be far better than the native system, but that the people did not like it better: they clung to their old institutions, however defective, and were averse to change, even though a change for the better. "In one respect," he said, "the natives of India are exactly like the inhabitants of all parts of the known world; they like their own habits and customs better than those of foreigners."

Having thus in unmeasured opposition to the Dalhousie theory flung down the gauntlet of the old school at the feet of the Governor-General, Low ceased from the enunciation of general principles, and turned to the discussion of the particular

* "When I went to Malwa, in 1850, where I met many old acquaintances, whom I had known when a very young man, and over whom I held no authority, I found these old acquaintances speak out much more distinctly as to their opinion of the Satarah case; so much so, that I was on several occasions obliged to check them. It is remarkable that every native who ever spoke to me respecting the annexation of Satárah, asked precisely the same question: 'What crime did the late Rajah commit that his country should be seized by the Company?' Thus clearly indicating their notions, that if any crime had been committed our act would have been justifiable, and not otherwise."—*Minute of Colonel Low, Feb. 10, 1854.*

case before him. He contended that the treaty between the British Government and the late Rajah did not limit the succession to heirs of his body, and that, therefore, there was a clear title to succession in the Bhonslá family by means of a son adopted by either the Rajah himself or by his eldest widow, in accordance with law and usage. The conduct, he said, of the last Prince of Nágpúr had not been such as to alienate this right; he had been loyal to the Paramount State, and his country had not been misgoverned; there had been nothing to call for military interference on our part, and little to compel grave remonstrance and rebuke. For what crime, then, was his line to be cut off and the honours of his House extinguished for ever? To refuse the right of adoption in such a case would, he alleged, be entirely contrary to the spirit, if not to the letter, of the treaty. But how was it to be conceded when it was not claimed; when no adoption had been reported; when it was certain that the Rajah had not exercised his right, and there had been no tidings of such a movement on the part of his widow? The answer to this was, that the Government had been somewhat in a hurry to extinguish the Ráj without waiting for the appearance of claimants, and that if they desired to perpetuate it, it was easy to find a fitting successor.

Of such opinions as these Low expected no support in the Council-chamber of Calcutta—no support from the authorities at home. It little mattered, indeed, what the latter might think, for the annexation of Nágpúr was decreed and to be accomplished without reference to England. As the extinction of the Satárah State had been approved by the Company, in the face of an undisputed adoption asserted at the right time, Dalhousie rightly judged that there would be no straining at a gnat in the Nágpúr case, where there had been no adoption at all. Indeed, the general principles upon which he had based his proceedings towards Satárah, in the first year of his administration having been accepted in Leadenhall-street, there could be no stickling about so mild an illustration of them as that afforded by the treatment of Nágpúr. The justification of the policy in the latter instance is to be found in the fact that there was no assertion of an adoption—no claim put forward on behalf of any individual—at the time when the British Government was called upon to determine the course to be pursued. It is true that the provisional Government might, for a time, have been vested in the eldest widow of the deceased Prince, adoption by

whom would have been recognised by Hindu law and Márathá usage; but it was not probable that the British Government would have thus gone out of its way to bolster up a decayed Maráthá dynasty, when the head of that Government conscientiously believed that it was the duty of the Paramount State to consolidate its dominions by recognising only among these effete Princes succession by direct heirship of the body. Cherishing the faith which he did, Dalhousie would have gone grievously wrong, and he would have stood convicted of a glaring inconsistency, if he had adopted any other course; so the kingdom of Barár was declared to have lapsed to the British Government, and the family of the Bhonslá was extinct.

The country passed under British rule, and the people became British subjects, without an audible murmur of discontent except from the recesses of the palace. There the wretched ladies of the royal household, at first dismayed and paralysed by the blow which had fallen upon them, began, after a little space, to bestir themselves and to clamour for their asserted rights. Liberal pensions had been settled upon them; but their family was without a head, and that which might soon have faded into an idea was rendered a galling and oppressive reality by the spoliation of the palace, which followed closely upon the extinction of the Ráj. The live stock and dead stock of the Bhonslá were sent to the hammer. It must have been a great day for speculative cattle-dealers at Sitábaldi when the royal elephants, horses, and bullocks were sold off at the price of carrion; * and a sad day, indeed, in the royal household, when the venerable Bankha Baí,† with all the wisdom and moderation of fourscore well-spent years upon her, was so stung by a sense of the indignity offered to her, that she threatened to fire the palace if the furniture were removed. But the furniture was removed, and the jewels of the Bhonslá family, with a few propitiatory exceptions, were sent to the Calcutta market. And I have heard it said that these seizures, these sales, created a

* Between five and six hundred elephants, camels, horses, and bullocks were sold for 1300*l*. The Ránis sent a protest to the Commissioner, and memorialised the Governor-General, alleging, in the best English that the Palace could furnish, that "on the 4th instant (Sept.) the sale of animals, viz. bullocks, horses, camels, and elephants, commenced to sell by public auction and resolution—a pair her hackery bullocks, valued 100 rupees, sold in the above sale for 5 rupees."

† The Bankha Baí was a widow of the deceased Rajah's grandfather.

worse impression, not only in Barár, but in the surrounding provinces, than the seizure of the kingdom itself. *

But even in the midst of their degradation, these unfortunate ladies clung to the belief that the Bhonslá family would some day be restored and rehabilitated. The Governor-General had argued that the widow, knowing that her husband was disinclined to adopt, had, for like reasons, abstained from adoption. He admitted the right according to Maráthá usage, but declared that she was unwilling to exercise it. He contended, too, that the Bankha Baí, the most influential of the royal ladies, would naturally be averse to a measure which would weaken her own authority in the palace. But his logic halted, and his prophecy failed. Both the elder and the younger lady were equally eager to perpetuate the regal dignities of their House. Mr. Mansel had suggested a compromise, in the shape of an arrangement somewhat similar to that which had been made with the Nawábs of the Karnátik, by which the title might be maintained, and a certain fixed share of the revenue set apart for its dotation. But he had been severely censured for his indiscretion, and had left Nágpúr in disgrace. He was, perhaps, the best friend that the Ránís had in that conjuncture; but—such is the value of opinion—they accused him, in the quaint Palace-English of their scribe, of "endeavouring to gain baronetage and exaltation of rank by reporting to the Governor-General that the late Rajah was destitute of heirs to succeed him, with a view to his Lordship being pleased to order the annexation of the territory." † But there was not a man in the country

* I know that the question of public and private property, in such cases, is a very difficult one, and I shall not attempt to decide it here. I only speak of the intense mortification which these sales create in the family itself, and the bad impression which they produce throughout the country. Rightly or wrongly, they cast great discredit on our name; and the gain of money is not worth the loss of character.

† Lord Dalhousie, in his Nágpúr Minute, says that the Rajah did not adopt, partly because he did not like to acknowledge his inability to beget a son, and partly because he feared that the existence of an adopted son might some day be used as a pretext for deposing him. He then observes: "The dislike of the late Rajah to the adoption of a successor, was of course known to his widow; and although the custom of the Maráthás exempts her from that necessity for having the concurrence of her husband in adoption, which general Hindu law imperatively requires, in order to render the act of adoption valid, still the known disinclination of the Rajah to all adoption could not fail to disincline his widow to have recourse to adoption after his decease." It will

less disposed to annex provinces and to humour Governors than Charles Mansel, and instead of being exalted in rank, he sacrificed his prospects to his principles and retired from the Service.

Failing altogether to move the Governor-General, the Ránís sent agents to London, but with no better result. After the manner of native emissaries from Indian Courts, they spent large sums of money in feeing lawyers and printing pamphlets, without making any impression on Leadenhall-street or Cannon-row, and at last, being recalled by their employers, and having nothing wherewith to pay their debts, they flung themselves on the generosity of their opponents, and were sent home by the help of the great Corporation whom they had reviled. Meanwhile, the elder widow of the late Rajah died, and a boy, of another branch, whom the Ránís called Jánojí Bhonslá, and in whose person they desired to prolong the Nágpúr dynasty, was formally adopted by the dying lady. Clutching at any chance, however desperate, an attempt was made to revive the question of the political adoption; but the sagacity of the Bankha Baí must have seen that it was too late, and that nothing but the private property of the deceased Princess could be thus secured to the adopted heir. The country of the Bhonslás had become as inalienably a part of the Company's possessions as the opium go-downs of Patná, or the gun-factory at Kásipúr.

Thus, within a few years of each other, the names of two of the great rulers of the Maráthá Empire ceased from off the roll of Indian Princes; and the territories of the Company were largely increased. Great in historical dignity as was the Satárah Raj, it was comparatively limited in geographical extent, whilst the Bhonslá, though but a servant in rank, owned rich and productive lands, yielding in profusion, among other good gifts, the great staple of our English manufactures.* Whilst the annexation of the Panjáb and of Pegu extended the British Empire at its two extreme ends, these Maráthá acquisi-

be seen at once that the ordinary logical acumen of the Governor-General failed him in this instance, for the very reasons given by the writer himself for the failure of adoption by the Rajah ceased altogether to be operative, *ipso facto*, "after his decease."

* Lord Dalhousie put forth the cotton-growing qualities of the Barár country as one of the many arguments which he adduced in favour of the annexation of the territory.

tions helped to consolidate it. Some unseemly patches, breaking the great rose-hued surface, which spoke of British supremacy in the East, were thus effaced from the map; and the Right of Lapse was proclaimed to the furthermost ends of our Indian dominions.

There is a circumstantial difference between these two cases, inasmuch as that, in the one, there was an actual and undisputed adoption by the deceased Rajah, and in the other there was none; but as Dalhousie had frankly stated that he would not have recognised a Nágpúr adoption had there been one, the two resumptions were governed by the same principle. And this was not a mere arbitrary assertion of the power of the strong over the weak, but was based, at all events, on a plausible substratum of something that simulated reason and justice. It was contended that, whenever a native Prince owed his existence as a sovereign ruler to the British Government, that Government had the right, on failure of direct heirs, to resume, at his death, the territories of which it had originally placed him in possession. The power that rightly gives, it was argued, may also rightfully take away. Now, in the cases both of Satárah and Nágpúr, the Princes, whom the British Government found in possession of those States, had forfeited their rights: the one by hidden treachery and rebellion, the other by open hostility. The one, after full inquiry, had been deposed; the other, many years before, had been driven into the jungle, and had perished in obscurity, a fugitive and an outcast.* In both cases, therefore, the "crime" had been committed which the natives of India are so willing to recognise as a legitimate reason for the punishment of the weaker State by the stronger. But the offence had been condoned, and the sovereignty had been suffered to survive; another member of the reigning family being set up by the Paramount State in place of the offending Prince. Both Partáb Singh and Ráguji Bhonslá, as individuals, owed their sovereign power

* It is to be observed, too, with respect to Satárah, that not only had the last Rajah been elevated by the British Government, but that the Ráj itself had been resuscitated by us in the person of his predecessor. *We had found the Rajah prostrate and a prisoner, almost, it may be said, at his last gasp; we had rescued him from his enemies, and set him up in a principality of his own*; a fact which, assuming the validity of the argument against adoption, necessarily imparted additional force to it. The same may be said of the Nágpúr Ráj. It was "resuscitated" by the British Government.

to the grace and favour of the British Government. All this is historical fact. It may be admitted, too, that when the crimes of which I have spoken were committed by the heads of the Satárah and Nágpúr families, the British Government would have been justified in imposing conditions upon the restoration of the Ráj, to the extent of limiting the succession to heirs of the body, or even in making a personal treaty with the favoured Prince conferring no absolute right of sovereignty upon his successors. But the question is whether, these restrictions, not having been penally imposed, at the time of forfeiture, the right which then might have been exercised could be justly asserted on the occurrence of a subsequent vacancy created by death? Lord Dalhousie thought that it could—that the circumstances under which the Satárah and Nágpúr Princes had received their principalities as free gifts from the British Government conferred certain rights of suzerainty on that Government, which otherwise they could not have properly asserted. But, on the other hand, it is contended that both principalities, whatsoever might have been the offences committed years before by their rulers, had been re-established in their integrity—that no restrictions as to their continuance had then been imposed—that treaties had been concluded containing the usual expressions with respect to succession—in a word, that the condonation had been complete, and that both the Satárah and the Nágpúr Houses really possessed all the rights and privileges which had belonged to them before the representative of the one compromised himself by a silly intrigue, and the head of the other, with equal fatuity, plunged into hostilities which could result only in his ruin.

This justificatory plea, based upon the alleged right of the British Government to resume, in default of direct heirs, tenures derived from the favour of the Lord Paramount, was again asserted about the same time, but with some diversity of application. Comparatively insignificant in itself, the case claims especial attention on account of results to be hereafter recorded in these pages. In the centre of India, among the small principalities of Bundelkhand, was the state of Jhánsi, held by a Maráthá chief, originally a vassal of the Peshwá. But on the transfer to the British Government of that Prince's possessions in Bundelkhand, the former had resolved "to declare the territory of Jhánsi to be hereditary in the family of the late Shéo Ráo Bháo, and to perpetuate with

Jhánsi.

his heirs the treaty concluded with the late Bháo;" and, accordingly, a treaty was concluded with the ruling chief, Rám Chand, then only a Subahdár, constituting "him, his heirs, and successors," hereditary rulers of the territory. Loyal and well disposed, he won the favour of the British Government, who, fifteen years after the conclusion of the treaty, conferred upon him the title of Rájah, which he only lived three years to enjoy.

For all purposes of succession he was a childless man; and so various claimants to the chiefship appeared. The British agent believed that the most valid claim was that of the late Rajah's uncle, who was at all events a direct lineal descendant of one of the former Subahdárs. He was a leper, and might have been rejected; but, incapable as he was, the people accepted him, and, for three years, the administration of Jhánsi was carried on in his name. At the end of those three years he died, also without heirs of the body, and various claimants as before came forward to dispute the succession. 1838. Having no thought of absorbing the State into our British territories, Lord Auckland appointed a commission of British officers to investigate and report upon the pretensions of the several claimants; and the result was, that Government, rightly considering that if the deceased Rájah had any title to the succession, his brother had now an equally good title, acknowledged Gangadhar Ráo's right to succeed to the hereditary chiefship.

Under the administration of Ragunáth the Leper the country had been grossly mismanaged, and as his successor was scarcely more competent, the British Government undertook to manage the State for him, and soon revived the revenue, which had dwindled down under the native rulers. But, in 1843, after the amputation of a limb of the territory for the support of the Bundelkhand Legion, the administration was restored to Gangadhar Ráo, who carried on the government for ten years, and then, like his predecessors, died childless.

Then again arose the question of succession; but the claims of the different aspirants to the Ráj were regarded with far other eyes than those which had scrutinised them in times past. The Governor-General recorded another fatal minute, by which the death-warrant of the State was signed. It was ruled that Jhánsi was a dependent State, held by the favour of the Peshwá, as Lord Paramount, and that his powers had devolved upon the British Government. A famous minute recorded, in 1837,

by Sir Charles Metcalfe, was cited to show the difference between Hindú sovereign Princes and "chiefs who hold grants of land or public revenue by gift from a sovereign or paramount Power," and to prove that, in the latter case, "the Power which made the grant, or that which by conquest or otherwise has succeeded to its rights, is entitled to limit succession," and to "resume on failure of direct heirs of the body."* To demonstrate the right to resume was in those days tantamount to exercising it. So Jhánsi was resumed. In vain the widow of the late Rájah, whom the Political Agent described as "a lady bearing a high character, and much respected by every one at Jhánsi," protested that her husband's House had ever been faithful to the British Government—in vain she dwelt upon services rendered in former days to that Government, and the acknowledgments which they had elicited from our rulers—in vain she pointed to the terms of the treaty, which did not, to her simple understanding, bar succession in accordance with the laws and usages of her country—in vain she quoted precedents to show that the grace and favour sought for Jhánsi had been yielded to other States. The fiat was irrevocable. It had been ruled that the interests both of the Jhánsi State and the British Government imperatively demanded annexation. "As it lies in the midst of other British districts," said Lord Dalhousie, "the possession of it as our own will tend to the improvement of the general internal administration of our possessions in Bundelkhand. That its incorporation with the British territories will be greatly for the benefit of the people of Jhánsi a reference to the results of experience will suffice to show." The results of experience have since shown to what extent the people of Jhánsi appreciated the benefits of that incorporation.

Karaulí.

Whilst this question was being disposed of by Lord Dalhousie and his colleagues, another lapse was under consideration, which had occurred some time before, but regarding which no final decision had been passed. In the

* But what Sir Charles Metcalfe really said was, that the paramount Power was "entitled to limit succession *according to the limitations of the grant*, which in general confirms it to heirs male of the body, and consequently precludes adoption. *In such cases*, therefore, the Power which granted, or the Power standing in its place, would have a right to resume on failure of heirs male of the body." This passage is very fairly quoted in Lord Dalhousie's Minute.

summer of 1852, the young chief of Karaulí, one of the smaller Rájput States, had died, after adopting another boy, connected with him by ties of kindred. At that time Colonel Low represented the British Government in Rájputáná, and he at once pronounced his opinion that the adoption ought immediately to be recognised.

The Governor-General hesitated. It appeared to him that Karaulí might, rightly and expediently, be declared to have lapsed. But his Council was divided; his Agent in *Rájputáná* had declared unequivocally for the adoption; and the case differed in some respects from the Satárah question, which had already been decided with the sanction and approval of the Home Government. How great the difference really was appeared far more clearly to the experienced eye of Sir Frederick Currie than to the vision of the Governor-General, clouded as it was by the film of a foregone conclusion.* The name of Satárah had, by the force of accidental circumstances, become great throughout the land, both in India and in England; it was a familiar name to thousands and tens of thousands who had never heard of Karaulí. With the Maráthás, too, the House of Siváji had been held in high veneration; but the Maráthás could only boast of recent sovereignty; their high estate was one of modern usurpation. Their power had risen side by side with our own, and had been crushed down by our greater weight and greater vigour. But the houses of Rájputáná had flourished centuries before the establishment of British rule; and the least of them had an ancestral dignity respected throughout the whole length and breadth of Hindustan, and treaty rights not less valid than any possessed by the greatest of territorial Princes. To men who had graduated, from boyhood upwards, in Indian statesmanship, there was something almost sacrilegious in the idea of laying a destroying hand even upon the least of the ancient Houses of Rájputáná—of destroying titles that had been honoured long years before the face of the white man had been seen in the country. But impressions of this kind are the growth of long intercourse with the people themselves, and we cannot be surprised that, after a year or two of Indian government, Lord Dalhousie, with all his un-

* Sir Frederick Currie's Minute on the Karaulí question is an admirable state-paper—accurate in its facts, clear in its logic, and unexceptionable in its political morality.

rivalled quickness of perception, should not have thoroughly understood the vital differences between the various races inhabiting the great continent of India. Had he done so, he would at once have sanctioned the proposed adoption; as it was, he referred the question to the final decision of the Home Government.

Eager as they were at that time to support the policy of Lord Dalhousie, and entire as was the faith of many of them in his wisdom, the Directors could not look with favour upon a proposal to commence the gradual extinction of the ancient principalities of Rájputáná. "It appears to us," they said, "that there is a marked distinction in fact between the case of Karaulí and Satárah, which is not sufficiently adverted to in the Minute of the Governor-General. The Satárah State was one of recent origin, derived altogether from the creation and gift of the British Government, whilst Karaulí is one of the oldest of the Rájpút States, which has been under the rule of its native princes from a period long anterior to the British power in India. It stands to us only in the relation of protected ally, and probably there is no part of India into which it is less desirable, except upon the strongest grounds, to substitute our government for that of the native rulers. In our opinion, such grounds do not exist in the present case, and we have, therefore, determined to sanction the succession of Bharat Pál."

Jan. 26, 1853.

But before the arrival of the despatch expressing these just sentiments and weighty opinions, all chance of the succession of Bharat Pál had passed away. Had the adoption been granted at once, it would, in all probability, have been accepted by the members of the late Rájah's family, by the principal chiefs, and by the people of the country. But it is the inevitable tendency of delay in such a case to unsettle the public mind, to raise questions which but for this suspense would not have been born, and to excite hopes and stimulate ambitions which otherwise would have lain dormant. So it happened that whilst London and Calcutta were corresponding about the rights of Bharat Pál, another claimant to the sovereignty of Karaulí was asserting his pretensions in the most demonstrative manner. Another and a nearer kinsman of the late Prince—older, and, therefore, of a more pronounced personal character—stood forward to proclaim his rights, and to maintain them by arms. The ladies of the royal family, the chiefs, and the people, sup-

ported his claims; and the representative of the British Government in Rájputáná recognised their validity. That representative was Sir Henry Lawrence. Succeeding General Low in the Agency, he cherished the same principles as those which had ever been so consistently maintained by that veteran statesman; but circumstances had arisen which moved him to give them a different application. This new pretender to the throne had better claims on the score of consanguinity than Bharat Pál, but Adoption overrides all claims of relationship, and, if the adoption were valid, the latter was legally the son and heir of the deceased. In this view, as consonant with the customs of the country, Henry Lawrence would have supported the succession of Bharat Pál; but, on investigation, it appeared that all the requirements and conditions of law and usage had not been fulfilled, and that the people themselves doubted the validity of the adoption. It appeared to him, therefore, that the British Government would best discharge its duty to Karaulí by allowing the succession of Madan Pál. Even on the score of adoption his claims were good, for he had been adopted by the eldest of the late Rájah's widows, which, in default of adoption by the Rájah himself, would have been good against all claimants. But, in addition to this, it was to be said of the pretensions of this man that he was older than the other; that a minority would thus be avoided altogether; that he had some personal claims to consideration; and that the voice of the chiefs and the people had decided in his favour. As the succession, therefore, of Bharat Pál had not been sanctioned, and as the decision of the Home Government in his favour had not been published, there would be no wrong to him in this preference of his rival, so Henry Lawrence recommended, and the Government of Lord Dalhousie approved, the succession of Madan Pál to the sovereignty of Karaulí.

So Lapse, in this instance, did not triumph; and the ancient Houses of Rájputáná, which, during these two years of suspense, had awaited the issue with the deepest interest, felt some temporary relief when it was known that the wedge of annexation had not been driven into the time-honoured circle of the States. But it is not to be supposed that because no wrong was done at last no injury was done by the delay. Public rumour recognises no Secret Department. It was well known at every native Court, in every native bazaar, that the British Government were discussing the policy of annexing or not annexing Karaulí.

The mere fact that there was a question to be discussed, in such a case, was sufficient to fill the minds of the people with anxiety and alarm. For two years Karaulí was without any other ruler than the Political Agent of the British Government; and this was a significant fact, the impression of which was not to be removed by the subsequent decision. The Rájput Princes lost their confidence in the good faith of the British Government. Karaulí had been spared, they scarcely knew how; some were fain to attribute it to the well-known justice and liberality of Henry Lawrence. But the same moderation might not be displayed again; there were childless men amongst them; and from that time a restless, uneasy feeling took possession of them, and no man felt sure that his House would not perish with him. It was not strange, indeed, that a year or two afterwards there should have been in circulation all over the country ominous reports to the effect that the policy of Lord Dalhousie had eventually triumphed, and that the gradual absorption of all the Rájput States had been sanctioned by the Home Government. It was a dangerous lie; and even the habitual reticence of the Court of Directors was not proof against the grossness of the calumny; so it was authoritatively contradicted. But not before it had worked its way in India, and done much to undermine the foundations of that confidence which is one of the main pillars of our strength.

Sambhalpúr 1849.

There is one other story of territorial annexation yet to be told—briefly, for it was not thought at the time to be of much political importance, and now is held but little in remembrance. Beyond the south-western frontier of Bengal was the territory of Sambhalpúr. It had formerly been an outlying district of the Nágpúr principality, but had been ceded by the Bonslah family, and had been bestowed by the British on a descendant of the old Sambhalpúr Rájahs, under terms which would have warranted the resumption of the estate on the death of the first incumbent. But twice the sovereign rights had been bestowed anew upon members of the family, and not until 1849, when Narain Singh lay at the point of death, was it determined to annex the territory to the British dominions. There were no heirs of the body; no near relatives of the Rájah. No adoption had been declared. The country was said to have been grievously misgoverned. And so there seemed to be a general agreement

that the Lapse was perfect, and that annexation might be righteously proclaimed. Dalhousie was absent from the Presidency; but the case was clear, and the Government neither in India nor in England hesitated for a moment. And, perhaps, though it was not without its own bitter fruit, there is less to be said against it, on the score of abstract justice, than against anything of which I have written in this division of my work.

But there were lapses of another kind, lapses which involved no gain of territory to the British Government, for the territory had been gained before. There were several deposed princes in the land, representatives of ancient Houses, whose sceptres had passed by conquest or by treaty into the white man's hand, but who still enjoyed the possession of considerable revenues, and maintained some semblance of their former dignity and state. It happened that, whilst Dalhousie reigned in India, three of these pensioned princes died. Of the story of one of them I must write in detail. There had once been three great Maráthá Houses: the Houses of Satárah, of Nágpúr, and of Púná. It has been told how Dalhousie extinguished the two first; the third had been for some thirty years territorially extinct when he was sent out to govern India. In 1818, at the close of the second great Maráthá war, the Peshwá, Bájí Ráo, surrendered to Sir John Malcolm. He had been betrayed into hostility, and treacherous hostility; he had appealed to the sword, and he had been fairly beaten; and there was nothing left for him but to end his days as an outcast and a fugitive, or to fling himself upon the mercy of the British Government. He chose the latter course; and when he gave himself to the English General, he knew that he was in the hands of one who sympathised with him in his fallen fortunes, and would be a generous friend to him in adversity. Malcolm pledged the Government to bestow upon the Peshwá, for the support of himself and family, an annual pension of not less than eight lakhs of rupees. The promise was said to be an over-liberal one; and there were those who at the time condemned Malcolm for his profuseness. But he replied, that "it had been the policy of the British Government, since its first establishment in India, to act towards princes, whose bad faith and treachery had compelled it to divest them of all power and dominion, with a generosity which almost lost sight of their offences. The effect of this course of proceeding in reconciling

The Story of the Peshwá.

all classes to its rule had been great. The liberality and the humanity which it had displayed on such occasions had, I was satisfied, done more than its arms towards the firm establishment of its power. It was, in fact, a conquest over mind, and among men so riveted in their habits and prejudices as the natives of their country, the effect, though unseen, was great beyond calculation." It was a solace to him to think that these sentiments were shared by such men as Mountstuart Elphinstone, David Ochterlony, and Thomas Munro.

So Báji Ráo went into honourable seclusion, and an asylum was found for him at Bithúr, distant some twelve miles from the great military station of Kánhpúr, in the North-Western Provinces of India. He was not then an old man, as age is calculated by years, but he was said to be of debauched habits and feeble constitution; and no one believed that he would very long survive to be a burden upon the Company. But he outlived his power for a third part of a century, living resignedly, if not contentedly, in his new home, with a large body of followers and dependents, mostly of his own race, and many others of the outward insignia of state. From the assemblage, under such circumstances, of so large a body of Maráthás, some feeling of apprehension and alarm might have arisen in the mind of the British Government, especially in troubled times; but the fidelity of the ex-Peshwá himself was as conspicuous as the good conduct and the orderly behaviour of his people. Nor was it only a passive loyalty that he manifested; for twice, in critical conjunctures, when the English were sore-pressed, he came forward with offers of assistance. When the War in Afghanistan had drained our Treasury, and money was grievously wanted, he lent the Company five lakhs of rupees; and when, afterwards, our dominions were threatened with an invasion from the Panjáb, and there was much talk all over the country of a hostile alliance between the Sikhs and the Maráthás, the steadfastness of his fidelity was evidenced by an offer made to the British Government to raise and to maintain at his own cost a thousand Horse and a thousand Foot. As he had the disposition, so also had he the means to serve us. His ample pension more than sufficed for the wants even of a retired monarch; and as years passed, people said that he had laid by a great store of wealth, and asked who was to be its inheritor? For it was with him, as it was with other Maráthá princes, he was going down to the grave leaving no son to

succeed him. So he adopted a son, from his own family stock,* and, some years before his death, sought the recognition of the British Government for an adoption embracing more than the right of succession to his savings (for this needed no sovereign sanction), the privilege of succeeding to the title and the pension of the Peshwá. The prayer was not granted; but the Company did not shut out all hope that, after the death of Bájí Ráo, some provision might be made for his family. The question was reserved for future consideration—that is, until the contingency of the ex-Peshwá's death should become an accomplished reality; and as at this time the old man was feeble, paralytic, and nearly blind, it was not expected that his pension would much longer remain a burden on the Indian revenues.

Death of Bájí Ráo.

But not until the 28th of January, 1851, when there was the weight of seventy-seven years upon him, did the last of the Peshwás close his eyes upon the world for ever. He left behind him a will, executed in 1839, in which he named as his adopted son, "to inherit and be the sole master of the Gadí of the Peshwá, the dominions, wealth, family possessions, treasure, and all his real and personal property," a youth known as Dúndú Pant, Náná Sáhib. When Bájí Ráo died, the heir was twenty-seven years old; described as "a quiet, unostentatious young man, not at all addicted to any extravagant habits, and invariably showing a ready disposition to attend to the advice of the British Commissioner." What he was safe to inherit was about £300,000, more than one-half of which was invested in Government securities; † but there was an immense body of dependents to be provided for, and it was thought that the British Government might appropriate a portion of the ex-Peshwá's stipend to the support of the family at Bithúr. The management of affairs was in the hands of the Subahdár Rámchandar Pant, a faithful friend and

The Náná Sáhib.

* Strictly it should be said that he adopted three sons and a grandson His will says: "That Dúndú Pant Náná, my eldest son, and Gangadhar Ráo, my youngest and third son, and Sada-Shéo Pant Dádá, son of my second son, Pundú Rang Ráo, my grandson; these three are my sons and grandson. After me Dúndú Pant Náná, my eldest son, Múkh Pardan, shall inherit and be the sole master of the Gadí of the Peshwá, &c."—*MS. Records*.

† The official report of the Commissioner said, 16 lakhs of Government paper, 10 lakhs of jewels, 3 lakhs of gold coins, 80,000 rupees gold ornaments, 20,000 rupees silver plate.

adherent of Bájí Ráo, who counselled his master with wisdom, and controlled his followers with vigour; and he now, with all due respect for the British Government, pleaded the cause of the adopted son of the Peshwá. "Náná Sáhib," he said, "considering the Honourable Company in the room of the late Maharájah as his protector and supporter, is full of hopes and free of care on this subject. His dependence in every way is on the kindness and liberality of the British Government, for the increase of whose power and prosperity he has ever been, and will continue to be, desirous." The British Commissioner at Bithúr * supported the appeal on behalf of the family, but it met with no favour in high places. Mr. Thomason was then Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. He was a good man, an able man, a man of high reputation, but he was one of the leaders of the New School, and was no friend to the princes and nobles of the land; and he told the Commissioner to discourage all hopes of further assistance in the breasts of the family, and to "strive to induce the numerous retainers of the Peshwá speedily to disperse and return to the Dakhin." Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General; and, in such a case, his views were little likely to differ from those of his Lieutenant. So he declared his opinion that the recommendations of the Commissioner were "uncalled for and unreasonable." "The Governor-General," it was added, "concurs in opinion with his Honour (Mr. Thomason) in thinking that, under any circumstances, the Family have no claim upon the Government; and he will by no means consent to any portion of the public revenues being conferred on them. His Lordship requests that the determination of the Government of India may be explicitly declared to the Family without delay." And it was so declared; but with some small alleviation of the harshness of the sentence, for the Jaghír, or rent-free estate, of Bithúr was to be continued to the Náná Sáhib, but without the exclusive jurisdiction which had been enjoyed by the ex-Peshwá.

Memorial of the Náná.

When Dúndú Pant learnt that there was no hope of any further assistance to the family at Bithúr from the liberality of the Government of India, he determined

* It should rather be said, "two British Commissioners." Colonel Manson was Commissioner when the Peshwá died, but he left Bithúr shortly afterwards, and Mr. Morland, then magistrate at Kánhpúr, took his place, and on him devolved the principal business of the settlement of the ex-Peshwá's affairs.

to appeal to the Court of Directors of the East India Company. It had been in contemplation during the lifetime of Bájí Ráo to adopt such a course, and a son of the Subahdár Rámchandar had been selected as the agent who was to prosecute the appeal. But, discouraged by the Commissioner, the project had been abandoned, and was not revived until all other hope had failed after the ex-Peshwá's death. Then it was thought that a reversal of the adverse decision might be obtained by memorialising the authorities in England, and a memorial was accordingly drawn up and despatched, in the usual manner, through the Government in India. "The course pursued by the local governments," it was said, "is not only an unfeeling one towards the numerous family of the deceased prince, left almost entirely dependent upon the promises of the East India Company, but inconsistent with what is due to the representative of a long line of sovereigns. Your memorialist, therefore, deems it expedient at once to appeal to your Honourable Court, not merely on the ground of the faith of treaties, but of a bare regard to the advantages the East India Company have derived from the last of the Maráthá Empire. . . . It would be contrary to the spirit of all treaties hitherto concluded to attach a special meaning to an article of the stipulations entered into, whilst another is interpreted and acted upon in its most liberal sense." And then the memorialist proceeded to argue, that as the Peshwá, on behalf of his heirs and successors, had ceded his territories to the Company, the Company were bound to pay the price of such cession to the Peshwá and his heirs and successors. If the compact were lasting on one side, so also should it be on the other. "Your memorialist submits that a cession of a perpetual revenue of thirty-four lakhs of rupees in consideration of an annual pension of eight lakhs establishes a *de facto* presumption that the payment of one is contingent upon the receipt of the other, and hence that, as long as those receipts continue, the payment of the pension is to follow." It was then argued that the mention, in the treaty, of the "Family" of the Peshwá indicated the hereditary character of the stipulation, on the part of the Company, as such mention would be unnecessary and unmeaning in its application to a mere life-grant, "for a provision for the support of the prince necessarily included the maintenance of his family;" and after this, from special arguments, the Náná Sáhib turned to a general assertion of his rights, as based on precedent and

analogy. "Your memorialist," it was said, "is at a loss to account for the difference between the treatment, by the Company, of the descendants of other princes and that experienced by the family of the Peshwá, represented by him. The ruler of Maisur evinced the most implacable hostility towards the Company's government; and your memorialist's father was one of the princes whose aid was invoked by the Company to crush a relentless enemy. When that chieftain fell, sword in hand, the Company, far from abandoning his progeny to their fate, have afforded an asylum and a liberal support to more than one generation of his descendants, without distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate. With equal or even greater liberality the Company delivered the dethroned Emperor of Delhi from a dungeon, re-invested him with the insignia of sovereignty, and assigned to him a munificent revenue, which is continued to his descendants to the present day. Wherein is your memorialist's case different? It is true that the Peshwá, after years of amity with the British Indian Government, during which he assigned to them revenue to the amount of half a crore of rupees, was unhappily engaged in war with them, by which he perilled his throne. But as he was not reduced to extremities, and even if reduced, closed with the terms proposed to him by the British Commander, and ceded his rich domains to place himself and his family under the fostering care of the Company, and as the Company still profit by the revenues of his hereditary possessions, on what principle are his descendants deprived of the pension included in those terms and the vestiges of sovereignty? Wherein are the claims of his family to the favour and consideration of the Company less than those of the conquered Maisurean or the captive Mughul?" Then the Náná Sáhib began to set forth his own personal claims as founded on the adoption in his favour; he quoted the best authorities on Hindu law to prove that the son by adoption has all the rights of the son by birth; and he cited numerous instances, drawn from the recent history of Hindustan and the Dakhin, to show how such adoptions had before been recognised by the British Government. "The same fact," he added, "is evinced in the daily practice of the Company's Courts all over India, in decreeing to the adopted sons of princes, of zamindars, and persons of every grade, the estates of those persons to the exclusion of other heirs of the blood. Indeed, unless the

British Indian Government is prepared to abrogate the Hindu Sacred Code, and to interdict the practice of the Hindu religion, of both of which adoption is a fundamental feature, your memorialist cannot understand with what consistency his claim to the pension of the late Peshwá can be denied, merely on the ground of his being an adopted son."

Another plea for refusal might be, nay, had been, based upon the fact that Bájí Ráo, from the savings of his pension, had accumulated and left behind him a large amount of private property, which no one could alienate from his heirs. Upon this the Náná Sáhib, with not unreasonable indignation, said: "That if the withholding of the pension proceeded from the supposition that the late Peshwá had left a sufficient provision for his family, it would be altogether foreign to the question, and unprecedented in the annals of the History of British India. The pension of eight lakhs of rupees per annum has been agreed upon on the part of the British Government, to enable his Highness the late Bájí Ráo to support himself and family; it is immaterial to the British Government what portion of that sum the late prince actually expended, nor has there been any agreement entered into to the effect that his Highness the late Bájí Ráo should be compelled to expend every fraction of an annual allowance accorded to him by a special treaty, in consideration of his ceding to the British Government territories yielding an annual and perpetual revenue of thirty-four lakl s of rupees. Nobody on earth had a right to control the expenditure of that pension, and if his Highness the late Bájí Ráo had saved every fraction of it, he would have been perfectly justified in doing so. Your memorialist would venture to ask, whether the British Government ever deigned to ask in what manner the pension granted to any of its numerous retired servants is expended? or whether any of them saves a portion, or what portion, of his pension? and, furthermore, in the event of its being proved that the incumbents of such pensions had saved a large portion thereof, it would be considered a sufficient reason for withholding the pension from the children in the proportions stipulated by the covenant entered into with its servant? And yet is a native prince, the descendant of an ancient scion of Royalty, who relies upon the justice and liberality of the British Government, deserving of less consideration than its covenanted servants? To disperse, however, any erroneous impression that may exist on the part of the

British Government on that score, your memorialist would respectfully beg to observe that the pension of eight lakhs of rupees, stipulated for by the treaty of 1818, was not exclusively for the support of his Highness the late Bájí Ráo and his family, but also for the maintenance of a large retinue of faithful adherents, who preferred following the ex-Peshwá in his voluntary exile. Their large number, fully known to the British Government, caused no inconsiderable call upon the reduced resources of his Highness; and, furthermore, if it be taken into consideration the appearance which Native princes, though rendered powerless, are still obliged to keep up to ensure respect, it may be easily imagined that the savings from a pension of eight lakhs of rupees, granted out of an annual revenue of thirty-four lakhs, could not have been large. But notwithstanding this heavy call upon the limited resources of the late Peshwá, his Highness husbanded his resources with much care, so as to be enabled to invest a portion of his annual income in public securities, which, at the time of his death, yielded an income of about eighty thousand rupees. Is then the foresight and the economy on the part of his Highness the late Bájí Ráo to be regarded as an offence deserving to be visited with the punishment of stopping the pension for the support of his family guaranteed by a formal treaty?"

MS. Records.

But neither the rhetoric nor the reasoning of the Náná Sáhib had any effect upon the Home Government. The Court of Directors of the East India Company were hard as a rock, and by no means to be moved to compassion. They had already expressed an opinion that the savings of the Peshwá were sufficient for the maintenance of his heirs and dependents; * and when the memorial came before them, they summarily rejected it, writing out to the Government to "inform the memorialist that the pension of his adoptive father was not hereditary, that he has no claim whatever to it, and that his application is wholly inadmissible." Such a reply as this must have crushed out all hope from

Decision of the Company.

May 4, 1853.

* "*May* 19, 1852.—We entirely approve of the decision of the Governor-General that the adopted son and dependents on Bájí Ráo have no claim upon the British Government. The large pension which the ex-Peshwá enjoyed during thirty-three years afforded him the means of making an abundant provision for his family and dependents, and the property, which he is known to have left, is amply sufficient for their support."—*The Court of Directors to the Government of India.—MS.*

the Bithúr Family, and shown the futility of further action; but it happened that, before this answer was received, the Náná Sáhib had sent an agent to England to prosecute his claims. This agent was not the son of the old Maráthá Subahdár, to whom the mission first contemplated was to have been entrusted, but a young and astute Muhammadan, with a good presence, a plausible address, and a knowledge of the English language. His name was Ázim-ullah Khán. In the summer of 1853 he appeared in England, and in conjunction with an Englishman named Biddle, prosecuted the claims of the Náná, but with no success. Judgment had already been recorded, and nothing that these agents could say or do was likely to cause its reversal.

So Ázim-ullah Khán, finding that little or nothing could be done in the way of business for his employer, devoted his energies to the pursuit of pleasure on his own account. Passing by reason of his fine clothes for a person of high station, he made his way into good society, and is said to have boasted of favours received from English ladies. Outwardly he was a gay, smiling, voluptuous sort of person; and even a shrewd observer might have thought that he was intent always upon the amusement of the hour. There was one man, however, in England at that time, who, perhaps, knew that the desires of the plausible Muhammadan were not bounded by the enjoyment of the present. For it happened that the agent, who had been sent to England by the deposed Satárah Family, in the hope of obtaining for them the restoration of their principality, was still resident in the English metropolis. This man was a Maráthá named Rangu Bápují. Able and energetic, he had pushed his suit with a laborious, untiring conscientiousness rarely seen in a Native envoy; but though aided by much soundness of argument and much fluency of rhetoric expended by others than hired advocates, upon the case of the Satárah Princes, he had failed to make an impression on their judges. Though of different race and different religion, these two men were knit together by common sympathies and kindred tasks, and in that autumn of 1853, by like failures and disappointments to brood over, and the same bitter animosities to cherish. What was said and what was done between them no Historian can relate. They were adepts in the art of dissimulation. So the crafty Maráthá made such a good impression even upon those whom his suit had so greatly troubled, that his debts

were paid for him, and he was sent back at the public expense to Bombay with money in his pocket from the Treasury of the India House;* whilst the gay Muhammadan floated about the surface of society and made a conspicuous figure at crowded watering-places, as if he dearly loved England and the English, and could not persuade himself to return to his own dreary and benighted land.

So little material are they to this History that I need not write in detail of the circumstances attending the extinction of the titular sovereignties of the Karnátik and Tanjúr, two ancient Houses, one Muhammadan, the other Hindu, that had once flourished in the Southern Peninsula. Lord Wellesley had stripped them of territorial power. It remained, therefore, only for Lord Dalhousie, when the Nawáb of the Karnátik and the Rájah of Tanjúr died without heirs of the body, to abolish the titular dignities of the two Families and "to resume the large stipends they had enjoyed, as Lapses to Government." Pensions were settled upon the surviving members of the two Families; but in each case, the head of the House made vehement remonstrance against the extinction of its honours, and long and loudly clamoured for restitution. There were many, doubtless, in Southern India who still clung with feelings of veneration to these shadowy pageants, and deplored the obliteration of the royal names that they had long honoured; and as a part of the great system of demolition these resumptions made a bad impression in more remote places. But empty titular dignities are dangerous possessions, and it may be, after all, only mistaken kindness to perpetuate them when the substance of royalty is gone.

Karnátik and Tanjúr.

1854.

1855.

*** In this chapter might have been included other cases of Lapse, as those of the Pargannah, of Udaipúr, on the South-Western Frontier, and of Jaitpúr, in Bundelkhand; but, although every additional absorption of territory tended to increase, in some measure, the feeling of insecurity in men's minds, they were comparatively of little political importance; and Lord Dalhousie did not think them worth a paragraph in his Farewell Minute.

* Rangu Bápují returned to India in December, 1853. The East India Company gave him 2500*l*. and a free passage.

CHAPTER III.

There was still another province to be absorbed into the British Empire under the administration of Lord Dalhousie; not by conquest, for its rulers had ever been our friends, and its people had recruited our armies; not by lapse, for there had always been a son or a brother, or some member of the royal house, to fulfil, according to the Muhammadan law of succession, the conditions of heirship, and there was still a king, the son of a king, upon the throne; but by a simple assertion of the dominant will of the British Government. This was the great province of Oudh, in the very heart of Hindustan, which had long tempted us, alike by its local situation and the reputed wealth of its natural resources.

It is a story not to be lightly told in a few sentences. Its close connexion with some of the more important passages of this history fully warrants some amplitude of narration. Before the British settler had established himself on the peninsula of India, Oudh was a province of the Mughul Empire. When that empire was distracted and weakened by the invasion of Nádir Shah, the treachery of the servant was turned against the master, and little by little the Governor began to govern for himself. But holding only an official, though an hereditary title, he still acknowledged his vassalage; and long after the Great Mughul had shrivelled into a pensioner and a pageant, the Nawáb-Wazír of Oudh was nominally his minister.

Of the earliest history of British connexion with the Court of the Wazír, it is not necessary to write in detail. There is nothing less creditable in the annals of the rise and progress of the British power in the East. The Nawáb had territory; the Nawáb had subjects; the Nawáb had neighbours; more than all, the Nawáb had money. But although he possessed in abundance the raw material of soldiers, he had not been able to organise an army sufficient for all the external and internal requirements of the State, and so he was fain to avail himself

of the superior military skill and discipline of the white men, and to hire British battalions to do his work. At first this was done in an irregular, desultory kind of way, job-work, as in the infamous case of the Rohilla massacre; but afterwards it assumed a more formal and recognised shape, and solemn engagements were entered into with the Nawáb, by which we undertook, in consideration of certain money-payments, known as the Subsidy, to provide a certain number of British troops for the internal and external defence of his Excellency's dominions.

In truth it was a vicious system, one that can hardly be too severely condemned. By it we established a Double Government of the worst kind. The Political and Military government was in the hands of the Company; the internal administration of the Oudh territories still rested with the Nawáb-Wazír. In other words, hedged in and protected by the British battalions, a bad race of Eastern Princes were suffered to do, or not to do, what they liked. Under such influences it is not strange that disorder of every kind ran riot over the whole length and breadth of the land. Never were the evils of misrule more horribly apparent; never were the vices of an indolent and rapacious Government productive of a greater sum of misery. The extravagance and profligacy of the Court were written in hideous characters on the desolated face of the country. It was left to the Nawáb's Government to dispense justice: justice was not dispensed. It was left to the Nawáb's Government to collect the revenue; it was wrung from the people at the point of the bayonet. The Court was sumptuous and profligate; the people poor and wretched. The expenses of the royal household were enormous. Hundreds of richly-caparisoned voracious elephants ate up the wealth of whole districts, or carried it in glittering apparel on their backs. A multitudinous throng of unserviceable attendants; bands of dancing-girls; flocks of parasites; costly feasts and ceremonies; folly and pomp and profligacy of every conceivable description, drained the coffers of the State. A vicious and extravagant Government soon beget a poor and a suffering people; a poor and a suffering people, in turn, perpetuate the curse of a bankrupt Government. The process of retaliation is sure. To support the lavish expenditure of the Court the mass of the people were persecuted and outraged. Bands of armed mercenaries were let loose upon the ryots in support of the rapacity of the Ámils, or Revenue-farmers, whose appearance was a terror to the people. Under

such a system of cruelty and extortion, the country soon became a desert, and the Government then learnt by hard experience that the prosperity of the people is the only true source of wealth. The lesson was thrown away. The decrease of the revenue was not accompanied by a corresponding diminution of the profligate expenditure of the Court, or by any effort to introduce a better administrative system. Instead of this, every new year saw the unhappy country lapsing into worse disorder, with less disposition, as time advanced, on the part of the local Government to remedy the evils beneath which it was groaning. Advice, protestation, remonstrance were in vain. Lord Cornwallis advised, protested, remonstrated: Sir John Shore advised, protested, remonstrated. At last a statesman of a very different temper appeared upon the scene.

Lord Wellesley was a despot in every pulse of his heart. But he was a despot of the right kind; for he was a man of consummate vigour and ability, and he seldom made a mistake. The condition of Oudh soon attracted his attention; not because its government was bad and its people were wretched, but because that country might either be a bulwark of safety to our own dominions, or a sea of danger which might overflow and destroy us. That poor old blind ex-King, Shah Zamán, of the Saduzai family of Kábul, known to the present generation as the feeble appendage of a feeble puppet, had been, a little while before the advent of Lord Wellesley, in the heyday of his pride and power, meditating great deeds which he had not the ability to accomplish, and keeping the British power in India in a chronic state of unrest. If ever there had been any real peril, it had passed away before the new century was a year old. But it might arise again. Doubtless the military strength of the Afghans was marvellously overrated in those days: but still there was the fact of a minacious Muhammadan power beyond the frontier, not only meditating invasion, but stirring up the Muhammadan Princes of India to combine in a religious war against the usurping Faringhí. Saadat Áli was then on the musnud of Oudh; he was the creature and the friend of the English, but Wazír Áli, whom he had supplanted, had intrigued with Zamán Shah, and would not only have welcomed, but have subsidised also an Afghan force in his own dominions. At the bottom of all our alarm, at that time, were some not unreasonable apprehensions of the ambitious designs of the first Napoleon. At all events, it was sound policy to render Oudh

powerful for good and powerless for evil. To the accomplishment of this it was necessary that large bodies of ill-disciplined and irregularly paid native troops in the service of the Nawáb-Wazír—lawless bands that had been a terror alike to him and to his people—should be forthwith disbanded, and that British troops should occupy their place. Now, already the Wazír was paying seventy-six lakhs of rupees, or more than three-quarters of a million of money, for his subsidised British troops, and though he was willing to disband his own levies, and thereby to secure some saving to the State, it was but small in proportion to the expense of the more costly machinery of British military defence now to be substituted for them. The additional burden to be imposed upon Oudh was little less than half a million of money, and the unfortunate Wazír, whose resources had been strained to the utmost to pay the previous subsidy, declared his inability to meet any further demands on his treasury. This was what Lord Wellesley expected—nay, more, it was what he wanted. If the Wazír could not pay in money, he could pay in money's worth. He had rich lands that might be ceded in perpetuity to the Company for the punctual payment of the subsidy. So the Governor-General prepared a treaty ceding the required provinces, and with a formidable array of British troops at his call, dragooned the Wazír into sullen submission to the will of the English Sultan. The new treaty was signed; and districts then yielding a million and a half of money, and now nearly double that amount of annual revenue, passed under the administration of the British Government.

Now, this treaty—the last ever ratified between the two Governments—bound the Nawáb-Wazír to "establish in his reserved dominions such a system of administration, to be carried on by his own officers, as should be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects, and be calculated to secure the lives and properties of the inhabitants," and he undertook at the same time "always to advise with and to act in conformity to the counsels of the officers of the East India Company." But the English ruler knew well that there was small hope of these conditions being fulfilled. "I am satisfied," he said, "that no effectual security can be provided against the ruin of the province of Oudh until the exclusive management of the civil and military government of that country shall be transferred to the Company under suitable provisions for the maintenance

of his Excellency and his family." He saw plainly before him the breakdown of the whole system, and believed that in the course of a few years the entire administration of the province would be transferred to the hands of our British officers. There was one thing, however, on which he did not calculate—the moderation of his successors. He lived nearly half a century after these words were written, and yet the treaty outlived him by many years.

If there was, at any time, hope for Oudh, under purely native administration, it was during the wazírship of Saadat Áli, for he was not a bad man, and he appears to have had rather enlightened views with respect to some important administrative questions.* But the opportunity was lost; and whilst the counsels of our British officers did nothing for the people, the bayonets of our British soldiers restrained them from doing anything for themselves. Thus matters grew from bad to worse, and from worse to worst. One Governor-General followed another; one Resident followed another; one Wazír followed another: but still the great tide of evil increased in volume, in darkness, and in depth.

But, although the Nawáb-Wazírs of Oudh were, doubtless, bad rulers and bad men, it must be admitted that they were good allies. False to their people—false to their own manhood—they were true to the British Government. They were never known to break out into open hostility, or to smoulder in hidden treachery against us; and they rendered good service, when they could, to the Power to which they owed so little. They supplied our armies, in time of war, with grain; they supplied us with carriage-cattle; better still, they supplied us with cash. There was money in the Treasury of Lakhnao, when there was none in the Treasury of Calcutta; and the time came when the Wazír's cash was needed by the British ruler. Engaged in an extensive and costly war, Lord Hastings wanted two

* Sir Henry Lawrence says that he was "in advance of the Bengal Government *of the day on revenue arrangements*," and *gives two striking instances of the fact. With characteristic candour and impartiality, Lawrence adds that Saadat Áli's mal-administration was "mainly attributable to* English interference, to the resentment he *felt for his own* wrongs, and *the* bitterness of soul with which he must have received all advice from his oppressors, no less than to the impunity with which they enabled him to play the tyrant."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. iii. See also Lawrence's Essays, in which this paper is printed.

millions for the prosecution of his great enterprises. They were forthcoming at the right time; and the British Government were not unwilling in exchange to bestow both titles and territories on the Wazír. The times were propitious. The successful close of the Nipál war placed at our disposal an unhealthy and impracticable tract of country at the foot of the Hills. This "terai" ceded to us by the Nipálese was sold for a million of money to the Wazír, to whose domains it was contiguous, and he himself expanded and bloomed into a King under the fostering sun of British favour and affection.* The interest of the other million was paid away by our Government to a tribe of Oudh pensioners, who were not sorry to exchange for a British guarantee the erratic benevolence of their native masters.

It would take long to trace the history of the progressive misrule of the Oudh dominions under a succession of sovereigns all of the same class—passive permitters of evil rather than active perpetrators of iniquity, careless of, but not rejoicing in, the sufferings of their people. The rulers of Oudh, whether Wazírs or Kings, had not the energy to be tyrants. They simply allowed things to take their course. Sunk in voluptuousness and pollution, often too horribly revolting to be described, they gave themselves up to the guidance of panders and parasites, and cared not so long as these wretched creatures administered to their sensual appetites. Affairs of State were pushed aside as painful intrusions. Corruption stalked openly abroad. Every one had his price. Place, honour, justice—everything was to be bought. Fiddlers and barbers, pimps and mountebanks, became great functionaries. There were high revels at the capital, whilst, in the interior of the country, every kind of enormity was being exercised to wring from the helpless people the money which supplied the indulgences of the Court. Much of the land was farmed out to large con-

* Sir John Malcolm said that the very mention of "his Majesty of Oudh" made him sick. "Would I make," he said, "a golden calf, and suffer him to throw off his subordinate title, and assume equality with the degraded representative of a line of monarchs to whom his ancestors have been for ages really or nominally subject?" Sir Henry Lawrence seems to have thought that this was precisely what was intended. "The Nawab Ghází-ud-dín Haidar," he wrote, "was encouraged to assume the title of King; Lord Hastings calculated on this exciting a rivalry between the Oudh and Dehli Families."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. iii.; and Essays, page 119.

tractors, who exacted every possible farthing from the cultivators; and were not seldom, upon complaint of extortion, made, unless inquiry were silenced by corruption, to disgorge into the royal treasury a large portion of their gains. Murders of the most revolting type, gang-robberies of the most outrageous character, were committed in open day. There were no Courts of Justice except at Lakhnao; no Police but at the capital and on the frontier. The British troops were continually called out to coerce refractory landholders, and to stimulate revenue-collection at the point of the bayonet. The sovereign—Wazír or King—knew that they would do their duty; knew that, under the obligations of the treaty, his authority would be supported; and so he lay secure in his Zenana, and fiddled whilst his country was in flames.

And so years passed; and ever went there from the Residency to the Council-chamber of the Supreme Government the same unvarying story of frightful misrule. Residents expostulated, Governors-General protested against it. The protests in due course became threats. Time after time it was announced to the rulers of Oudh that, unless some great and immediate reforms were introduced into the system of administration, the British Government, as lords-paramount, would have no course left to them but to assume the direction of affairs, and to reduce the sovereign of Oudh to a pensioner and a pageant.

By no man was the principle of non-interference supported more strenuously, both in theory and in practice, than by Lord William Bentinck. But in the affairs of this Oudh State he considered that he was under a righteous necessity to interfere. In April, 1831, he visited Lakhnao; and there, distinctly and emphatically told the King that "unless his territories were governed upon other principles than those hitherto followed, and the prosperity of the people made the principal object of his administration, the precedents afforded by the principalities of the Karnátik and Tanjúr would be applied to the kingdom of Oudh, and to the entire management of the country, and the King would be transmuted into a State prisoner." This was no mere formal harangue, but the deliberate enunciation of the Government of India; and to increase the impression which it was calculated to make on the mind of the King, the warning was afterwards communicated to him in writing, But, spoken or written, the words were of no avail. He threw himself more than ever into the arms of parasites and panders; plunged more

eply into debauchery than before, and openly violated all ecency by appearing drunk in the public streets of Lakhnao.* With the corruption of the Court the disorders of the country increased. The crisis seemed now to have arrived. A communication was made to the Court of Oudh, that "instructions to assume the government of the country, if circumstances should render such a measure necessary, had arrived, and that their execution was suspended merely in the hope that the necessity of enforcing them might be obviated."

But in what manner was the administration to be assumed — in what manner was the improvement of the country to be brought about by the intervention of the British Government? *There were different courses open to us, and they were all diligently considered.* We might appoint a Minister of our own selection, and rule through him by the agency of the Resident. We might depose the ruling sovereign, and set up another and more hopeful specimen of royalty in his place. We might place the country under European administration, giving all the surplus revenues to the King. We might assume the entire government, reducing the King to a mere titular dignitary, and giving him a fixed share of the annual revenues. Or we might annex the country outright, giving him so many lakhs of rupees a year, without reference to the revenues of the principality. The ablest and most experienced Indian statesmen of the day had been invited to give their opinions. Malcolm and Metcalfe spoke freely out. The first of the above schemes seemed to represent the mildest form of interference; but both the soldier and the civilian unhesitatingly rejected it as the most odious, and in practice, the most ruinous of all interposition. Far better, they said, to set up a new King, or even to assume the government for ourselves. But those were days when native dynasties were not considered unmixed evils, and native institutions were not pure abominations in our eyes. And it was thought that we might assume the administration of Oudh, but *not for ourselves.* It was thought that the British Government might become the guardian and trustee of the King of Oudh, administer his affairs through native agency and in accordance

* This was Nasar-ud-dín Haidar—the second of the Oudh kings, and perhaps the worst. I speak dubiously, however, of their comparative merits. Colonel Sleeman seems to have thought that he might have extracted more good out of Nasar-ud-dín than out of any of the rest.

with native institutions, and pay every single rupee into the royal treasury.

This was the scheme of Lord William Bentinck, a man of unsurpassed honesty and justice; and it met with favourable acceptance in Leadenhall-street. The Court of Directors at that time, true to the old traditions of the Company, were slow to encourage their agents to seek pretexts for the extension of their dominions. The despatches which they sent out to India were for the most part distinguished by a praiseworthy moderation; sometimes, indeed, by a noble frankness and sincerity, which shewed that the authors of them were above all disguises and pretences. They now looked the Oudh business fairly in the face, but hoping still against hope that there might be some amelioration, they suffered, after the receipt of Lord William Bentinck's report, a year to pass away, and then another year, before issuing authoritative orders, and then they sent forth a despatch, which was intended to bring the whole question to a final issue. They spoke of the feelings which the deplorable situation of a country so long and so nearly connected with them had excited in their minds—of the obligations which such a state of things imposed upon them—of the necessity of finding means of effecting a great alteration. They acknowledged, as they had acknowledged before, that our connexion with the country had largely contributed to the sufferings of the people, inasmuch as it had afforded protection to tyranny, and rendered hopeless the resistance of the oppressed.* This made it the more incumbent upon them to adopt measures for the mitigation, if not the removal, of the existing evil. They could not look on whilst the ruin of the country was consummated. It was certain that something must be done. But what was that something to be? Then they set in array before them, somewhat as I have done above, the different measures which might be resorted to, and, dwelling upon the course which Bentinck had recommended, placed in the hands of the Governor-General a discretionary power to carry the proposed measure into effect at such

July 16, 1834.

* For a long time as we have said, our troops were employed by the King's officers to aid them in the collection of the revenue; thereby active, as the Court frankly described it, as "instruments of extortion and vengeance." This scandal no longer existed; but our battalions were still stationed in the country, ready to dragoon down any open insurrection that might result from the misgovernment of Oudh.

period, and in such a manner as might seem advisable, but with the utmost possible consideration for the King, whose consent to the proposed arrangement was, if possible, to be obtained. It was suggested that all the titles and honours of sovereignty should remain with his Majesty as before; that the revenues should be mainly expended in the administration and the improvement of the country, and that either the surplus, or a fixed stipend, should be assigned to the King. But, at the same time, the Government were instructed, in the event of their proceeding to assume the administration of the country, distinctly to announce that, so soon as the necessary reforms should have been effected, the administration of the country, as in the case of Nágpúr, would be restored to its native rulers.

Colonel John Low, of whose character and career I have already spoken, was then Resident at Lakhnao. The despatch of the Court of Directors, authorizing the temporary assumption of the Government of Oudh, was communicated to him, and he pondered over its contents. The scheme appeared in his eyes to be distinguished by its moderation and humanity, and to be one of a singularly disinterested character. But he was convinced that it would be misunderstood. He said that, however pure the motives of the British Government might be, the natives of India would surely believe that we had taken the country for ourselves. So he recommended the adoption of another method of obtaining the same end. Fully impressed with the necessity of removing the reigning King, Nasar-ud-dín, he advised the Government to set up another ruler in his place; and in order that the measure might be above all suspicion, to abstain from receiving a single rupee, or a single acre of ground, as the price of his elevation. "What I recommend is this," he said, "that the next heir should be invested with the full powers of sovereignty; and that the people of Oudh should continue to live under their own institutions." He had faith in the character of that next heir; he believed that a change of men would produce a change of measures; and, at all events, it was but bare justice to try the experiment.

But, before anything had been done by the Government of India, in accordance with the discretion delegated to them by the Court of Directors, the experiment which Low had suggested inaugurated itself. Not without suspicion of poison, but really, I believe, killed only by strong drink, Nasar-ud-din Haidar died on a memorable July night. It was a crisis of no common

magnitude, for there was a disputed succession; and large bodies of lawless native troops in Lakhnao were ready to strike at a moment's notice. The cool courage of Low and his assistants saved the city from a deluge of blood. An uncle of the deceased Prince—an old man and a cripple, respectable in his feebleness—was declared King, with the consent of the British Government; and the independence of Oudh had another lease of existence.

Lord Auckland was, at that time, Governor-General of India. The new King, who could not but feel that he was a creature of the British, pledged himself to sign a new treaty. And soon it was laid before him. That the engagements of the old treaty had been violated, day after day, year after year, for more than a third part of the century, was a fact too patent to be questioned. The misgovernment of the country was a chronic breach of treaty. Whether the British or the Oudh Government were more responsible for it was somewhat doubtful to every clear understanding and every unprejudiced mind. The source of the failure was in the treaty itself, which the author of it well knew from the first was one of impossible fulfilment. But it was still a breach of treaty, and there was another in the entertainment of vast numbers of soldiers over and above the stipulated allowance. Those native levies had gradually swollen, according to Resident Low's calculations, to the bulk of seventy thousand men. Here was an evil not to be longer permitted; wonder, indeed, was it that it should have been permitted so long. This the new treaty was to remedy; no less than the continued mal-administration of the country by native agency. It provided, therefore, that in the event of any further-protracted misrule, the British Government should be entitled to appoint its own officers to the management of any part, small or great, of the province; that the old native levies should be abandoned, and a new force, commanded by British officers, organised in its place, at the cost of the Oudh Government. But there was no idea of touching, in any other way, the revenues of the country. An account was to be rendered of every rupee received and expended, and the balance was to be paid punctually into the Oudh Treasury.

This was the abortion, often cited in later years as the Oudh Treaty of 1837. Authentic history recites that the Government of India were in throes with it, but the strangling hand of higher authority crushed all life out of the thing before it had

become a fact. The treaty was wholly and absolutely disallowed by the Home Government.* They took especial exception to the establishment of the new auxiliary force, which was to cost the Oudh Treasury sixteen lakhs of rupees a year; for, with all the pure logic of honesty, they said that the treaty of 1801 had made it compulsory on the British Government to provide for the defence of the country, and that a large tract of territory had been ceded with the express object of securing the payment of the troops necessary for this purpose. If, then, it were expedient to organise a fresh force under British officers, it was for the Company, not for the Oudh Government, to defray the expenses of the new levy. But not only on these grounds did they object to the treaty. It is true that, a few years before, they had given the Governor-General discretionary power to deal, as he thought best, with the disorders of Oudh, even to the extent of a temporary assumption of the government; but this authority had been issued at a time when Nasar-ud-din, of whose vicious incapacity they had had many years' experience, sat upon the throne; and the Home Government were strongly of opinion that the new King, of whose character they had received a favourable account, ought to be allowed a fair trial, under the provisions of the treaty existing at the time of his accession to the throne. They therefore directed the abrogation, not of any one article, but of the entire treaty. Wishing, however, the annulment of the treaty to appear rather as an act of grace from the Government of India than as the result of positive and unconditional instructions from England, they gave a large discretion to the Governor-General as to the mode of announcing this abrogation to the Court of Lakhnao.

The receipt of these orders disturbed and perplexed the Governor-General. Arrangements for the organisation of the Oudh auxiliary force had already advanced too far to admit of the suspension of the measure. It was a season, however, of difficulty and supposed danger, for the seeds of the Afghan war had been sown. Some, at least, of our regular troops in Oudh were wanted to do our own work; so, in any view of the case, it was necessary to fill their places. The Auxiliary Force, therefore, was not to be arrested in its formation, but it was to be main-

* That is to say, by the Secret Committee, who had, by Act of Parliament, special powers in this matter of Treaty-making.

tained at the Company's expense. Intimation to this effect was given to the King in a letter from the Governor-General, which, after acquainting his Majesty that the British Government had determined to relieve him of a burden which, in the existing state of the country, might have imposed heavier exactions on the people than they well were able to bear, expressed a strong hope that the King would see, in the relaxation of this demand, good reason for applying his surplus revenues firstly to the relief of oppressive taxation, and, secondly, to the prosecution of useful public works. But nothing was said, in this letter, about the abrogation of the entire treaty, nor was it desired that the Resident, in his conferences with the King or his minister, should say anything on that subject. The Governor-General, still hoping that the Home Government might be induced to consent to the terms of the treaty (the condition of the auxiliary force alone excluded), abstained from an acknowledgment which, he believed, would weaken the authority of his Government. But this was a mistake, and worse than a mistake. It betrayed an absence of moral courage not easily to be justified or forgiven. The Home Government never acknowledged the validity of any later treaty than that which Lord Wellesley had negotiated at the commencement of the century.

Such is the history of the treaty of 1837. It was never carried out in a single particular, and seldom heard of again until after a lapse of nearly twenty years, except in a collection of treaties into which it crept by mistake.* And, for some

* Much was attempted to be made out of this circumstance—but the mistake of an under Secretary cannot give validity to a treaty which the highest authorities refused to ratify. If Lord Auckland was unwilling to declare the nullity of the treaty because its nullification hurt the pride of his Government, the Home Government showed no such unwillingness, for, in 1838, the following return was made to Parliament, under the signature of one of the Secretaries of the Board of Control:

"There has been no treaty concluded with the present King of Oudh, which has been ratified by the Court of Directors, with the approbation of the Commissioners for the affairs of India. (Signed) "R. GORDON.

"India Board, 3rd July, 1838."

It must, however, be admitted, on the other hand, that, years after this date, even in the Lakhnao Residency, the treaty was held to be valid. In October, 1853, Colonel Sleeman wrote to Sir James Hogg: "The treaty of 1837 gives our Government ample authority to take the whole administration on ourselves." And again, in 1854, to Colonel Low: "Our Government would be fully authorised at any time to enforce the penalty prescribed in your treaty of 1837." This was doubly a mistake. The treaty was certainly not Low's.

time, indeed, little was heard of Oudh itself. A Native State is never so near to death, but that it may become quite hale and lusty again when the energies and activities of the British are engrossed by a foreign war. Now, it happened that, for some time to come, the British had quite a crop of foreign wars. First, the great Afghanistan war of Auckland, which made him wholly forgetful of Oudh—her People and her King—her sorrows and her sensualities. Then there was the Sindh war of Ellenborough, intended to wash out by a small victory the stain of a great defeat, but fixing a still deeper stain upon the character of the nation; and next the fierce Maráthá onslaught, which followed closely upon it. Then there was the invasion from beyond the Satlaj, and the first Sikh war, in which Hardinge was most reluctantly immersed. Altogether, some eight years of incessant war, with a prospect of further strife, kept the sword out of the scabbard and the portfolio out of the hand. Then Oudh was safe in its insignificance and obscurity. Moreover, Oudh was, as before, loyal and sympathising, and, although the hoardings of Saadat Áli had long since been squandered, there was still money in the Treasure-chests of Lakhnao. But peace came, and with it a new birth of danger to the rulers of that misruled province. There had been no change for the better; nay, rather there had been change for the worse, during the years of our conflicts beyond the frontier. One Prince had succeeded another only to emulate the vices of his ancestors with certain special variations of his own. And when Lord Hardinge, in the quiet interval between the two Sikh wars, turned his thoughts towards the kingdom of Oudh, he found Wájid Áli Shah, then a young man in the first year of his reign, giving foul promise of sustaining the character of the Royal House.*

With the same moderation as had been shown by Lord William Bentinck, but also with the same strong sense of the paramount duty of the British Government to arrest the dis-

* There was something in the number *seven* fatal to the Princes of Oudh. Ghazí-ud-dín Haidar died in 1827; Nasar-ud-dín in 1837; and Umjid Áli Shah in 1847. The last named succeeded, in 1842, the old King, whom we had set up, and from whose better character there appeared at one time to be some hope of an improved administration. But, *capax imperii nisi imperasset*, he was, for all purposes of government, as incompetent as his predecessors. His besetting infirmity was avarice, and he seemed to care for nothing so long as the treasure-chest was full.

orders which had so long been preying upon the vitals of the country, Lord Hardinge lifted up his voice in earnest remonstrance and solemn warning; and the young King cowered beneath the keen glance of the clear blue eyes that were turned upon him. There were no vague words in that admonition; no uncertain sound in their utterance. Wájid Áli Shah was distinctly told that the clemency of the British Government would allow him two years of grace; but that if at the end of that period of probation there were no manifest signs of improvement, the British Government could, in the interests of humanity, no longer righteously abstain from interfering peremptorily and absolutely for the introduction of a system of administration calculated to restore order and prosperity to the kingdom of Oudh. The discretionary power had years before been placed in the hands of the Governor-General, and these admonitions failing, it would assuredly be exercised. A general outline of the means, by which the administration might be reformed, was laid down in a memorandum read aloud to the King; and it was added that, if his Majesty cordially entered into the plan, he might have the satisfaction, within the specified period of two years, of checking and eradicating the worst abuses, and, at the same time, of maintaining his own authority and the native institutions of his kingdom unimpaired—but that if he should adhere to his old evil ways, he must be prepared for the alternative and its consequences.

Nervous and excitable at all times, and greatly affected by these words, the King essayed to speak; but the power of utterance had gone from him. So he took a sheet of paper and wrote upon it, that he thanked the Governor-General, and would regard his counsels as though they had been addressed by a father to his son. There are no counsels so habitually disregarded; the King, therefore, kept his word. Relieved from the presence of the Governor-General his agitation subsided, and he betook himself, without a thought of the future, to his old courses. Fiddlers and dancers, singing men and eunuchs, were suffered to usurp the government and to absorb the revenues of the country. The evil influence of these vile panders and parasites was felt throughout all conditions of society and in all parts of the country. Sunk in the uttermost abysses of enfeebling debauchery, the King pushed aside the business which he felt himself incapable of transacting, and went in search of new pleasures. Stimulated to the utmost by unnatural excite-

ments, his appetites were satiated by the debaucheries of the Zenana, and, with an understanding emasculated to the point of childishness, he turned to the more harmless delights of dancing, and drumming, and drawing, and manufacturing small rhymes. Had he devoted himself to these pursuits in private life, there would have been small harm in them, but overjoyed with his success as a musician, he went about the crowded streets of Lakhnao with a big drum round his neck, striking as much noise out of it as he could, with all the extravagance of childish delight.

The two years of probation had passed away, and the British Resident reported that "the King had not, since the Governor-General's visit in October, 1847, shown any signs of being fully aware of the responsibility he incurred." "In fact," he added, "I do not think that his Majesty can ever be brought to feel the responsibilities of sovereignty strongly enough to be induced to bear that portion of the burden of its duties that must necessarily devolve upon him; he will always confide it to the worthless minions who are kept for his amusements, and enjoy exclusively his society and his confidence." So the time had arrived when the British Government might have righteously assumed the administration of Oudh. The King had justly incurred the penalty, but the paramount power was in no haste to inflict it. Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General of India; but again the external conflicts of the British were the salvation of the sovereignty of Oudh. The Panjáb was in flames, and once more Lakhnao was forgotten. The conquest of the Sikhs; the annexation of their country; the new Burmese war and its results; the lapses of which I have spoken in my last chapter; and many important affairs of internal administration of which I have yet to speak, occupied the ever-active mind of Lord Dalhousie until the last year of his reign; but it was felt by every one, who knew and pondered over the wretched state of the country, that the day of reckoning was approaching, and that the British Government could not much longer shrink from the performance of a duty imposed upon it by every consideration of humanity.

Colonel Sleeman was then Resident at Lakhnao. He was a man of a liberal and humane nature, thoroughly acquainted with the character and feelings, the institutions and usages of the people of India. No man had a larger toleration for the short-comings of native Governments, because no one knew

better how much our own political system had aggravated, if it had not produced, the evils of which we most complained. But he sympathised at the same time acutely with the sufferings of the people living under those native Governments; and his sympathy overcame his toleration. Having lived all his adult life in India—the greater part of it in, or on the borders of, the Native States—he was destitute of all overweening prepossessions in favour of European institutions and the "blessings of British rule." But the more he saw, on the spot, of the terrible effects of the misgovernment of Oudh, the more convinced he was of the paramount duty of the British Government to step in and arrest the atrocities which were converting one of the finest provinces of India into a moral pest-house. In 1849 and 1850 he made a tour through the interior of the country. He carried with him the prestige of a name second to none in India, as that of a friend of the poor, a protector of the weak, and a redresser of their wrongs. Conversing freely and familiarly in the native languages, and knowing well the character and the feelings of the people, he had a manner that inspired confidence, and the art of extracting from every man the information which he was best able to afford. During this tour in the interior, he noted down, from day to day, all the most striking facts which were brought to his notice, with the reflections which were suggested by them; and the whole presented a revolting picture of the worst type of misrule—of a feebleness worse than despotism, of an apathy more productive of human suffering than the worst forms of tyrannous activity. In the absence of all controlling authority, the strong carried on everywhere a war of extermination against the weak. Powerful families, waxing gross on outrage and rapine, built forts, collected followers, and pillaged and murdered at discretion, without fear of justice overtaking their crimes. Nay, indeed, the greater the criminal the more sure he was of protection, for he could purchase immunity with his spoil. There was hardly, indeed, an atrocity committed, from one end of the country to the other, that was not, directly or indirectly, the result of the profligacy and corruption of the Court.*

* "The Talúkdars keep the country in a perpetual state of disturbance, and render life, property, and industry everywhere insecure. Whenever they quarrel with each other, or with the local authorities of the Government, from whatever cause, they take to indiscriminate plunder and murder—over all

Such was Colonel Sleeman's report of the state of the Oudh country; such was his account of what he had seen with his own eyes or heard with his own ears. There was not a man in the Two Services who was more distressed by the fury for annexation which was at that time breaking out in the most influential public prints and the highest official circles. He saw clearly the danger into which this grievous lust of dominion was hurrying us, and he made a great effort to arrest the evil;* but he lifted up a warning voice in vain. The letters which he addressed to the Governor-General and to the Chairman of the East India Company appear to have produced no effect. He did not see clearly, at that time, that the principles which he held in such abhorrence were cherished by Lord Dalhousie him-

lands not held by men of the same class—no road, town, village, or hamlet is secure from their merciless attacks—robbery and murder become their diversion, their sport, and they think no more of taking the lives of men, women, and children, who never offended them, than those of deer and wild hogs. They not only rob and murder, but seize, confine, and torture all whom they seize, and suppose to have money or credit, till they ransom themselves with all they have, or can beg or borrow Hardly a day has passed since I left Lakhnao, in which I have not had abundant proof of numerous atrocities of this kind committed by landholders within the district through which I was passing, year by year, up to the present day." And again: "It is worthy of remark that these great landholders, who have recently acquired their possessions by the plunder and the murder of their weaker neighbours, and who continue their system of plunder in order to acquire the means to maintain their gangs and add to their possessions, are those who are most favoured at Court, and most conciliated by the local rulers, because they are more able and more willing to pay for the favour of the one and set at defiance the authority of the other."—*Sleeman's Diary.*

* See Sleeman's Correspondence, *passim.* *Exempli gratiâ:* "In September, 1848, I took the liberty to mention to your Lordship my fears that the system of annexing and absorbing Native States—so popular with our Indian Services, and so much advocated by a certain class of writers in public journals—might some day render us too visibly dependent upon our Native Army; that they might see it, and that accidents might occur to unite them, or too great a portion of them, in some desperate act."—*Colonel Sleeman to Lord Dalhousie,* April, 1852. And again: "I deem such doctrines to be dangerous to our rule in India, and prejudicial to the best interests of the country. The people see that these annexations and confiscations go on, and that rewards and honorary distinctions are given for them and for the victories which lead to them, and for little else; and they are too apt to infer that they are systematic and encouraged and prescribed from home. The Native States I consider to be breakwaters, and when they are all swept away we shall be left to the mercy of our Native Army, which may not always be sufficiently under our control."—*Colonel Sleeman to Sir James Hogg,* January, 1853.

self, and he did not know that the Court of Directors had such faith in their Governor-General that they were content to substitute his principles for their own. But, utterly distasteful to him as were the then prevailing sentiments in favour of absorption and confiscation, Sleeman never closed his eyes against the fact that interference in the affairs of Oudh, even to the extent of the direct assumption of the government, would be a righteous interference. Year after year he had pressed upon the Governor-General the urgent necessity of the measure. But, perhaps, had he known in what manner his advice was destined to be followed, and how his authority would be asserted in justification of an act which he could never countenance, he would rather have suffered the feeble-minded debauchee who was called King of Oudh still to remain in undisturbed possession of the throne, than have uttered a word that might hasten a measure so at variance with his sense of justice, and so injurious as he thought to our best interests, as that of which the interference of Government eventually took the shape.

Sleeman's advice had been clear, consistent, unmistakable. "Assume the administration," he said, "but do not grasp the revenues of the country." Some years before the same advice had been given by Henry Lawrence,* between whom and Sleeman there was much concord of opinion and some similitude of character. The private letters of the latter, addressed to the highest Indian functionaries, and, therefore, having all the weight and authority of public documents, were as distinct upon this point as the most emphatic words could make them. "What the people want, and most earnestly pray for," he wrote to the Governor-General, "is that our Government should take upon itself the responsibility of governing them well and permanently. All classes, save the knaves, who now surround and govern the King, earnestly pray for this—the educated classes, because they would then have a chance of respectable employment, which none of them now have; the middle classes, because they find no protection or encouragement, and no hope

* "Let the management," he said, "be assumed under some such rules as those which were laid down by Lord William Bentinck. Let the administration of the country, as far as possible, be native. *Let not a rupee come into the Company's coffers.*" (The italics are Lawrence's.) "Let Oudh be at last governed, not for one man, the King, but for him and his people."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. iii. (1845); and Lawrence's Essays, p. 132.

that their children will be permitted to inherit the property they leave, not invested in our Government Securities; and the humbler classes, because they are now abandoned to the merciless rapacity of the starving troops and other public establishments, and of the landholders driven or invited to rebellion by the present state of misrule." But he added: "I believe that it is your Lordship's wish that the whole of the revenues of Oudh should be expended for the benefit of the Royal Family and People of Oudh, and that the British Government should disclaim any wish to derive any pecuniary advantage from assuming to itself the administration." And again, about the same time, he had written to the Chairman of the Court of Directors, urging the expediency of assuming the administration, but adding: "If we do this, we must, in order to stand well with the rest of India, honestly and distinctly disclaim all interested motives, and appropriate the whole of the revenues for the benefit of the People and Royal Family of Oudh. If we do this, all India will think us right." And again, a few months later, writing to the same high authority, he said, mournfully and prophetically, that to annex and confiscate the country, and to appropriate the revenues to ourselves, would "be most profitable in a pecuniary view, but most injurious in a political one. It would tend to accelerate the crisis which the doctrines of the absorbing school must sooner or later bring upon us." *

Such was the counsel Sleeman gave; such were the warnings he uttered. But he did not remain in India, nay, indeed, he did not live, to see his advice ignored, his cautions disregarded. After long years of arduous and honourable service, compelled to retire in broken health from his post, he died on his homeward voyage, leaving behind him a name second to none upon the roll of the benefactors and civilisers of India, for he had grappled with her greatest abomination, and had effectually subdued it. Some solace had it been to him when he turned his back upon the country to know that his place would be well and worthily filled. "Had your Lordship left the choice of a successor to me," he wrote to the Governor-General, "I should have pointed out Colonel Outram; and I feel very much

Thaggi.

September, 1854.

* Private correspondence of Sir W. H. Sleeman, printed at the end of the English edition of his "Diary in Oudh."

which required a hand at once gentle and strong. The fame of Outram was not the fame of a spoliator, but of a just man *friendly to the native Princes and chiefs of India, who had lifted up his voice against wrongs done to them in his time*, and who would rather have closed his public career than have been the agent of an unrighteous policy. But a measure which Low, and Sleeman, and Henry Lawrence had approved, nay, which in the interests of humanity they had strenuously recommended, was little likely to be an unrighteous one, and Outram, whilst rejoicing that his past career had thus been stamped by his Government with the highest practical approval, accepted the offer in the full assurance that he could fulfil its duties without a stain upon his honour or a burden upon his conscience.*

Making all haste to join his appointment, Outram quitted Aden, where the summons reached him, and took ship for Calcutta, where he arrived in the first month of the cold season.

November, 1854.

His instructions were soon prepared for him; they were brief, but they suggested the settled resolution of Government to wait no longer for impossible improvements from within, but at once to shape their measures for the assertion, in accordance with Treaty, of the authority of the Paramount State. But it was not a thing to be done in a hurry. The measure itself was to be deliberately carried out after certain preliminary formalities of inquiry and reference. It was Outram's part to inquire. A report upon the existing state of Oudh was called for from the new Resident, and before the end of March it was forwarded to Calcutta. It was an elaborate history of the misgovernment of Oudh from the commencement of the century, a dark catalogue of crime and suffering "caused by the culpable apathy of the Sovereign and the Durbar." "I have shown," said the new Resident, in conclusion, "that the affairs of Oudh still continue in the same state, if not worse, in which Colonel Sleeman from time to time described them to be, and that the improvement which Lord Hardinge peremptorily demanded, seven years ago, at the hands of the King, in pursuance of the Treaty of 1801, has not, in any degree, been effected. And I have no hesitation in declaring my opinion, therefore, that the duty imposed on the British

* I speak, of course, of the mere fact of the assumption of the administration. The manner of carrying out the measure had not then been decided.

Government by that treaty cannot any longer admit of our 'honestly indulging the reluctance which the Government of India has felt heretofore to have recourse to those extreme measures which alone can be of any real efficiency in remedying the evils from which the state of Oudh has suffered so long.'"

To this report, and to much earlier information of the same kind with which the archives of Government were laden, the Governor-General gave earnest and sustained attention amidst the refreshing quiet of the Blue Mountains of Madras. The weighty document had picked up, on its road through Calcutta, another still more weighty, in the shape of a minute written by General Low. Few as were the words, they exhausted all the arguments in favour of intervention, and clothed them with the authority of a great name. No other name could have invested them with this authority, for no other man had seen so much of the evils of native rule in Oudh, and no man was on principle more averse to the extinction of the native dynasties of India. All men must have felt the case to be very bad when John Low, who had spoken the brave words in defence of the Princes and chiefs of India which I have cited in the last chapter, was driven to the forcible expression of his conviction, that it was the paramount duty of the British Government to interfere at once for the protection of the people of Oudh.*

March 28, 1856.

It was not possible to add much in the way of fact to what Outram had compiled, or much in the way of argument to what Low had written. But Dalhousie, to whom the fine bracing

* Low said that he was in favour of interference, "because the public and shameful oppressions committed on the people by Government officers in Oudh have of late years been constant and extreme; because the King of Oudh has continually, during many years, broken the Treaty by systematically disregarding our advice, instead of following it, or even endeavouring to follow it; because we are bound by *Treaty* (quite different in that respect from our position relatively to most of the great Native States) to prevent serious interior misrule in Oudh; because it has been fully proved that we have not prevented it, and that we cannot prevent it by the present mode of conducting our relations with that State; and because no man of common sense can entertain the smallest expectation that the present King of Oudh can ever become an efficient ruler of his country." And he added to these pungent sentences an expression of opinion that the unfulfilled threats of Lord Hardinge had increased the evil, inasmuch as that they had produced an impression in Oudh that the Indian Government were restrained from interference by the orders of higher authority at home.

air of the Nilgírís had imparted a new-born capacity for sustained labour, sat himself down to review the whole question in a gigantic minute. He signed it on the 18th June; and, indeed, it was his Waterloo the crowning victory of annexation. It is not necessary to repeat the facts, for I have stated them, or the arguments, for I have suggested them. No reader can have followed me thus far, without a strong assurance on his mind, that it would have been a grievous wrong done to humanity to have any longer abstained from interference. But what was the interference to be? Here was a question for the Governor-General to solve in the invigorating atmosphere of Útakamand—a question, the solution of which was to yield the crowning measure of his long vice-regal career.

There may have been many ways of working out the practical details of this measure; but there was only one uncertain point which was of much substantial importance. All men agreed that the Treaty of 1801 might rightfully be declared to have ceased by reason of repeated violations, and that with the consent of the King, if attainable, or without it, if unattainable, the Government of the country might be transferred to the hands of European administrators. That the King must be reduced to a mere cypher was certain; it was certain that all possible respect ought to be shown to him in his fallen fortunes, and that he and all his family ought to be splendidly endowed; no question could well be raised upon these points. The question was, what was to be done with the surplus revenue after paying all the expenses of administration? Just and wise men, as has been shown, had protested against the absorption of a single rupee into the British Treasury. They said that it would be as politic as it would be righteous, to demonstrate to all the States and Nations of India, that we had not deposed the King of Oudh for our own benefit—that we had done a righteous act on broad principles of humanity, by which we had gained nothing. But Lord Dalhousie, though he proposed not to annex the country, determined to take the revenues.

It is not very easy to arrive at a just conception of his views: "The reform of the administration," he said, "may be wrought, and the prosperity of the people may be secured, without resorting to so extreme a measure as the annexation of the territory and the abolition of the throne. I, for my part, therefore, do not recommend that the province of Oudh should be declared to be British territory." But he proposed that the

King of Oudh, whilst retaining the sovereignty of his dominions, should "vest all power, jurisdiction, rights and claims thereto belonging in the hands of the East India Company," and that the surplus revenues should be at the disposal of the Company. What this territorial sovereignty was to be, without territorial rights or territorial revenues, it is not easy to see. When the Nawáb of the Karnátik and the Rájah of Tanjúr were deprived of their rights and revenues, they were held to be not territorial, but titular sovereigns. The Nizam, on the other hand, might properly be described as "territorial sovereign" of the Assigned Districts, although the administration had been taken from him, because an account of the revenue was to be rendered to him, and the surplus was to be paid into his hands. But the King of Oudh, in Dalhousie's scheme, was to have had no more to do with his territories than the titular sovereigns of the Karnátik and Tanjúr; and yet he was to be told that he was "to retain the sovereignty of all the territories" of which he was then in possession.

Strictly interpreted to the letter, the scheme did not suggest the annexation of Oudh. The province was not to be incorporated with the British dominions. The revenues were to be kept distinct from those of the empire; there was to be a separate balance-sheet; and thus far the province was to have a sort of integrity of its own. This is sufficiently intelligible in itself; and, if the balance being struck, the available surplus had been payable to the King of Oudh, the rest of the scheme would have been intelligible also, for there would have been a quasi-sovereignty of the territories thus administered still remaining with the King. But the balance being payable into the British Treasury, it appears that Oudh, in this state of financial isolation, would still have substantially been British territory, as much as if it had become a component part of the empire. Again, under the proposed system, Oudh would have been beyond the circle of our ordinary legislation, in which respect it would not have differed much from other "Non-Regulation Provinces"; and if it had, even this Legislative segregation superadded to the Financial isolation of which I have spoken, would not have made it any the less British territory. The Channel Islands have a separate Budget and distinct laws of their own, but still they are component parts of the British Empire, although they do not pay their surplus into the British Treasury. But in everything that really constitutes Kingship,

the Bailiff of Jersey is as much the territorial sovereign of that island as Wájid Áli would have been territorial sovereign of Oudh under Lord Dalhousie's programme of non-annexation.

But this transparent disguise was not to be worn; this distinction without a difference was not to be asserted, anywhere out of Lord Dalhousie's great Minute. The thing that was to be done soon came to take its proper place in the Councils of the Indian Empire as the Annexation of Oudh; and it was as the annexation of Oudh that the measure was considered by the Government at home. The Court of Directors consented to the annexation of Oudh. The Board of Control consented to the annexation of Oudh. The British Cabinet consented to the annexation of Oudh. The word was not then, as it since has been, freely used in official documents, but it was in all men's minds, and many spoke it out bluntly instead of talking delicately about "assuming the Government of the Country." And, whether right or wrong, the responsibility of the measure rested as much with the Queen's Ministers as with the Merchant Company. That the Company had for long years shown great forbearance is certain. They had hoped against hope, and acted against all experience. So eager, indeed, had they been to give the Native Princes of India a fair trial, that they had disallowed the proposed treaty of 1837, and had pronounced an authoritative opinion in favour of the maintenance of the then existing Native States of India. But twenty more years of misrule and anarchy had raised in their minds a feeling of wondering self-reproach at the thought of their own patience; and when they responded to the reference from Calcutta, they said that the doubt raised by a survey of the facts before them, was not whether it was then incumbent upon them to free themselves from the responsibility of any longer upholding such a Government, but whether they could excuse themselves for not having, many years before, performed so imperative a duty.

November 19, 1855.

The despatch of the Court of Directors was signed in the middle of November. At midnight on the 2nd of January, the Governor-General mastered its contents. Had he thought of himself more than of his country, he would not have been there at that time. The energies of his mind were undimmed; but climate, and much toil, and a heavy sorrow weighing on his heart, had shattered a frame never constitutionally robust, and all men said that he was

"breaking." Without any failure of duty, without any imputation on his zeal, he might have left to his successor the ungrateful task of turning into stern realities the oft-repeated menaces of the British rulers who had gone before him. But he was not one to shrink from the performance of such a task because it was a painful and unpopular one. He believed that by no one could the duty of bringing the Oudh Government to solemn account be so fitly discharged as by one who had watched for seven years the accumulation of its offences, and seen the measure of its guilt filled to the brim. He had intimated, therefore, to the Court of Directors his willingness to remain at his post to discharge this duty, and in the despatch, which he read in the quiet of that January night, he saw on official record the alacrity with which his offer was accepted, and he girded himself for the closing act of his long and eventful administration.*

Next morning he summoned a Council. It was little more than a form. Dalhousie had waited for the authoritative sanction of the Home Government; but he knew that sanction was coming, and he was prepared for its arrival. The greater part of the work had, indeed, been already done. The instructions to be sent to the Resident; the treaty to be proposed to the King; the proclamation to be issued to the people had all been drafted. The whole scheme of internal government had been matured, and the agency to be employed had been carefully considered. The muster-roll of the new administration was ready, and the machinery was complete. The system was very closely to resemble that which had been tried with such good success in the Panjáb, and its agents were, as in that province, to be a mixed body of civil and military officers, under a Chief Commissioner. All the weighty documents, by which the revolution was to be effected, were in the portfolio of the Foreign Secretary; and now, at this meeting of the Council, they were formally let loose to do their work.

The task which Outram was commissioned to perform was a difficult, a delicate, and a painful one. He was to endeavour to persuade the King of Oudh formally to abdicate his sovereign functions, and to make over, by a solemn treaty, the government of his territories to the East India Company. In the event of his refusal, a proclamation was to be issued, declaring

* The Court of Directors to the Government of India, November 19, 1855. Paragraph 19.

the whole of Oudh to be British territory. By a man of Outram's humane and generous nature no counsel from his Government was needed to induce him to do the work entrusted to him in the manner least likely to wound the feelings of the King. But it was right that such counsel should be given. It was given; but the decree of the Paramount State, tempered as it might be by outward courtesy of manner, was still to be carried out, with stern and resolute action. No protests, no remonstrances, no promises, no prayers were to be suffered to arrest the retributive measure for a day. It need not be added that no resistance could avert it. A body of British troops, sufficient to trample down all possible opposition, had been moved up into a position to overawe Lakhnao, and for the doomed Government of Oudh to attempt to save itself by a display of force would have been only to court a most useless butchery.

Outram received his instructions at the end of January. On the last day of the month he placed himself in communication with the Oudh Minister, clearly stated the orders of the British Government, and said that they were final and decisive. Four days were spent in preliminary formalities and negotiations. In true Oriental fashion, the Court endeavoured to gain time, and, appealing to Outram, through the aged Queen Mother—a woman with far more of masculine energy and resolution than her son—importuned him to persuade his Government to give the King another trial, to wait for the arrival of the new Governor-General, to dictate to Wájid Áli any reforms to be carried out in his name. All this had been expected; all this provided for. Outram had but one answer; the day of trial, the day of forbearance, was past. All that he could now do was to deliver his message to the King.

On the 4th of February, Wájid Áli announced his willingness to receive the British Resident; and Outram, accompanied by his lieutenants, Hayes and Weston, proceeded to the palace. Strange and significant symptoms greeted them as they went. The guns at the palace-gates were dismounted. The palace-guards were unarmed. The guard of honour, who should have presented arms to the Resident, saluted him only with their hands. Attended by his brother and a few of his confidential Ministers, the King received the English gentlemen at the usual spot; and after the wonted ceremonies, the business commenced. Outram presented to the King a letter from the Governor-General, which contained, in terms of courteous ex-

planation, the sentence that had been passed upon him, and urged him not to resist it. A draft of the proposed treaty was then placed in his hands. He received it with a passionate burst of grief, declared that treaties were only between equals; that there was no need for him to sign it, as the British would do with him and his possessions as they pleased; they had taken his honour and his country, and he would not ask them for the means of maintaining his life. All that he sought was permission to proceed to England, and cast himself and his sorrows at the foot of the Throne. Nothing could move him from his resolution not to sign the treaty. He uncovered his head; placed his turban in the hands of the Resident, and sorrowfully declared that title, rank, honour, everything were gone; and that now the British Government, which had made his grandfather a King, might reduce him to nothing, and consign him to obscurity.

In this exaggerated display of helplessness there was something too characteristically Oriental for any part of it to be assigned to European prompting. But if the scene had been got up expressly for an English audience, it could not have been more cunningly contrived to increase the appearance of harshness and cruelty with which the friends of the King were prepared to invest the act of dethronement. No man was more likely than Outram to have been doubly pained, in the midst of all his painful duties, by the unmanly prostration of the King. To deal harshly with one who declared himself so feeble and defenceless, was like striking a woman or a cripple. But five millions of people were not to be given up, from generation to generation, to suffering and sorrow, because an effeminate Prince, when told he was no longer to have the power of inflicting measureless wrongs on his country, burst into tears, said that he was a miserable wretch, and took off his turban instead of taking out his sword.

There was nothing now left for Outram but to issue a proclamation, prepared for him in Calcutta, declaring the province of Oudh to be thenceforth, for ever, a component part of the British Indian Empire. It went forth to the people of Oudh; and the people of Oudh, without a murmur, accepted their new masters. There were no popular risings. Not a blow was struck in defence of the native dynasty of Oudh. The whole population went over quietly to their new rulers, and the country, for a time, was outwardly more tranquil than before.

This was the last act of Lord Dalhousie's Ministry. When he placed the Portfolio of Government in the hands of Lord Canning, the British officers to whom had been entrusted the work of reforming the administration of Oudh were discharging their prescribed duties with an energy which seemed to promise the happiest results. The King was still obstinate and sullen. He persisted in refusing to sign the treaty or to accept the proposed stipend of twelve lakhs; and though he had thought better of the idea of casting himself at the foot of the British Throne, he had made arrangements to send his nearest kindred—his mother, his brother, and his son—to England to perform a vicarious act of obeisance, and to clamour for his rights.

£120,000.

With what result the administration, as copied closely from the Panjábi system, was wrought out in detail, will be shown at a subsequent stage of this narrative. It was thought, as the work proceeded in quietude and in seeming prosperity, that it was a great success; and it gladdened the heart of the Government in Leadenhall-street, to think of the accomplishment of this peaceful revolution. But that the measure itself made a very bad impression on the minds of the people of India, is not to be doubted; not because of the deposition of a King who had abused his powers; not because of the introduction of a new system of administration for the benefit of the people; but because the humanity of the act was soiled by the profit which we derived from it; and to the comprehension of the multitude it appeared that the good of the people, which we had vaunted whilst serving ourselves, was nothing more than a pretext and a sham; and that we had simply extinguished one of the few remaining Muhammadan States of India that we might add so many thousands of square miles to our British territories, and so many millions of rupees to the revenues of the British Empire in the East. And who, it was asked, could be safe, if we thus treated one who had ever been the most faithful of our allies?

CHAPTER IV.

WHILST great principalities were thus being absorbed and ancient sovereignties extinguished, a war of extermination no less fatal in its effects, but more noiseless in its operations, was being waged against the nobility and gentry of the country. The original proclamation of this war did not emanate from Lord Dalhousie. The measures by which the native aristocracy were destroyed were not primarily his measures. It was the policy of the times to recognise nothing between the Prince and the Peasant; a policy which owed its birth not to one but to many; a policy, the greatest practical exposition of which was the Settlement of the North-West Provinces. It was adopted in pure good faith and with the most benevolent intentions. It had the sanction of many wise and good men. It was not the policy by which such statesmen as John Malcolm, George Clerk, and Henry Lawrence sought to govern the people; but it was sanctified by the genius of John Lawrence, and of the Gamaliel at whose feet he had sat, the virtuous, pure-minded James Thomason.

To bring the direct authority of the British Government to bear upon the great masses of the people, without the intervention of any powerful section of their own countrymen—to ignore, indeed, the existence of all governing classes but the European officers, who carried out the behests of that Government—seemed to be a wise and humane system of protection. It was intended to shelter the many from the injurious action of the interests and the passions of the few. The utter worthlessness of the upper classes was assumed to be a fact; and it was honestly believed that the obliteration of the aristocracy of the land was the greatest benefit that could be conferred on the people. And thus it happened that whilst the native sovereigns of India were one by one being extinguished, the native aristocracy had become well-nigh extinct.

Doubtless, we started upon a theory sound in the abstract, intent only on promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest

number; but if we had allowed ourselves to understand the genius and the institutions of the people, we should have respected the rights, natural and acquired, of all classes of the community, instead of working out any abstract theory of our own. It was in the very nature of things necessary, inevitable, that the extension of British rule, followed always by a reconstruction of the administration, and a substitution of civil and military establishments fashioned upon our own models and composed of our own people, should have deprived many of the chief people of their official rank and official emoluments, and cast them adrift upon the world, either to seek new fields of adventure in the unabsorbed Native States, or to fester into a disaffected and dangerous class sullenly biding their time. This is old story; an old complaint. Half a century before the time of which I am now writing, it had been alleged to be one of the main causes of that national outburst in Southern India known as the mutiny of Vellúr. But this very necessity for the extinction of the old race of high native functionaries, often hereditary office-bearers, ought to have rendered us all the more desirous to perpetuate the nobility whose greatness was derived from the Land. It is true that the titles of the landed gentry whom we found in possession were, in some cases, neither of very ancient date nor of very unquestionable origin. But, whatsoever the nature of their tenures, we found them in the possession of certain rights or privileges allowed to them by the Governments which we had supplanted, and our first care should have been to confirm and secure their enjoyment of them. We might have done this without sacrificing the rights of others. Indeed, we might have done it to the full contentment of the inferior agricultural classes. But many able English statesmen, especially in Upper India, had no toleration for any one who might properly be described as a Native Gentleman. They had large sympathies and a comprehensive humanity, but still they could not embrace any other idea of the Native Gentry of India than that of an institution to be righteously obliterated for the benefit of the great mass of the people.

There were two processes by which this depression of the privileged classes was effected. The one was known by the name of a Settlement, the other was called Resumption. It would be out of place here, if I had the ability, to enter minutely into the difficult question of landed tenures in India. It is an old story now, that when that clever coxcomb, Victor Jacque-

mont, asked Holt Mackenzie to explain to him in a five minutes' conversation the various systems of Land Revenue obtaining in different parts of the country, the experienced civilian replied that he had been for twenty years endeavouring to understand the subject and had not mastered it yet. Such a rebuke ought to be remembered. The little that I have to say on the subject shall be said with the least possible use of technical terms, and with the one object of making the general reader acquainted with the process by which the substance of the great land-holders in Upper India was diminished by the action of the British Government.

Settlement Operations.

In the Literature of India the word "Settlement" is one of such frequent occurrence, and to the Indian resident it conveys such a distinct idea, that there is some danger of forgetting that the general reader may not be equally conversant with the exact meaning of the term. It may therefore, perhaps, be advantageously explained that as the Indian Revenue is mainly derived from the land, it is of the first importance, on the acquisition of new territory, clearly to ascertain the persons from whom the Government dues are to be exacted, and the amount that is payable by each. We may call it Rent or we may call it Revenue, it little matters. The adjustment of the mutual relations between the Government and the agriculturists was known as the Settlement of the Revenue. It was an affair of as much vital interest and concernment to the one as to the other, for to be charged with the payment of the Revenue was to be acknowledged as the proprietor of the land.

When we first took possession of the country ceded by the Nawáb-Wazir of Oudh, or conquered from the Maráthás, all sorts of proprietors presented themselves, and our officers, having no special theories and no overriding prejudices, were willing to consider the claims of all, whether small or great holders, whom they found in actual possession; and brief settlements or engagements were made with them, pending a more thorough investigation of their rights. There was, doubtless, at first a good deal of ignorance on our part, and a good deal of wrong-doing and usurpation on the part of those with whom we were called upon to deal. But the landed gentry of these Ceded and Conquered Provinces, though they suffered by the extension of the British Ráj, were not deliberately destroyed by a theory. It was the inevitable tendency of our Regulations,

especially of that great Mystery of Iniquity, the Sale Law, and of the immigration of astute native functionaries from the Lower Provinces, which inaugurated our rule, to subvert the supremacy of the old landholders. Under the system, which we introduced, men who had been proprietors of vast tracts of country as far as the eye could reach, shrivelled into tenants of mud-huts and possessors only of a few cooking-pots. The process, though certain in its results, was gradual in its operation; and the ruin which it entailed was incidental, not systematic. It was ignorantly suffered, not deliberately decreed. But, at a later period, when a new political creed had grown up among our British functionaries in India, and upon officers of this new school devolved the duty of fixing the relations of the agricultural classes with the British Government, the great besom of the Settlement swept out the remnant of the landed gentry from their baronial possessions, and a race of peasant-proprietors were recognised as the legitimate inheritors of the soil.

How this happened may be briefly stated. A Permanent Settlement on the Bengal model had been talked of, ordered and counter-ordered; but for nearly a third part of a century, under a series of brief engagements with holders of different kinds, uncertainty and confusion prevailed, injurious both to the Government and to the People. But in the time of Lord William Bentinck an order went forth for the revision of
1833. this system or no-system, based upon a detailed survey and a clearly recorded definition of rights, and what is known in History as the Settlement of the North-West Provinces was then formally commenced.

That it was benevolently designed and conscientiously executed, is not to be doubted. But it was marred by a Theory. In the pursuit of right, the framers of the settlement fell into wrong. Striving after justice, they perpetrated injustice. Nothing could be sounder than the declared principle, that
1845. "it was the duty of the Government to ascertain and protect all existing rights, those of the poor and humble villager as well as those of the rich and influential Tálukdar."* It was said that this principle had been not only asserted, but

* See letter of Mr. John Thornton, Secretary to Government, North-West Provinces, to Mr. H. M. Elliot, Secretary to Board of Revenue, April 30, 1845. It is added, with undeniable truth, that "in so far as this is done with care and diligence, will the measure be successful in placing property on a healthy and sound footing."

acted upon. But the fact is, that the practice halted a long way behind the principle. Such were the feelings with which many of our officers regarded the great landholders, that equal justice between the conflicting claims and interests of the two classes was too often ignored. There were scales over the eyes of commonly clear-sighted men when they came to look at this question in the face, and therefore the "poor and humble villager" had a full measure of justice, pressed down and running over, whilst the "rich and influential Tálukdar" had little or none.

There are few who have not become familiar with this word *Tálukdar;* who do not know that an influential class of men so styled in virtue of certain rights or interests in the land, were dispossessed of those rights or interests and reduced to absolute ruin. It must be understood, however, that the proprietary rights of which I speak were very different from the rights of landed property in England. The Tálukdar was little more than an hereditary revenue-contractor. His right was the right to all the just rents paid by the actual occupants, after satisfaction of the Government claims. His property was the rent *minus* the revenue of a particular estate. This Tálukdári right, or right of collection, was distinct from the Zamindári right, or proprietary right in the soil. The Tálukdar, who paid to Government the revenue of a large cluster of villages, had, perhaps, a proprietary right in some of these small estates; perhaps, in none. The proprietary right, in most instances, lay with the village communities. And it was the main effort of the English officers, engaged in the Settlement of the North-West Provinces, to bring these village occupants into direct relations with the Government, and to receive from them the amount of the assessment fixed upon their several estates.

Now it was a just and fitting thing that the rights of these village proprietors should be clearly defined. But it was not always just that the Government should enter into direct engagements with them and drive out the intervening Tálukdar. The actual occupants might, in a former generation, have been a consequence only of a pre-existing Tálukdári right, as in cases where cultivators had been located on waste lands by a contractor or grantee of the State; or the Tálukdar might have acquired his position by purchase, by favour, perhaps by fraud, after the location of the actual occupants; still it was a proprietary interest, perhaps centuries old. Let us explain their

position as we may, these Tálukdars constituted the landed aristocracy of the country; they had recognised manorial rights: they had, in many instances, all the dignity and power of great feudal barons, and, doubtless, often turned that power to bad account. But whether for good or for evil, in past years, we found them existing as a recognised institution: and it was at the same time a cruel wrong and a grievous error to sweep it away as though it were an encumbrance and an usurpation.

The theory of the Settlement officers was that the village Zamindars had an inalienable right in the soil, and that the Tálukdar was little better than an upstart and an impostor. All the defects in his tenure were rigidly scanned; all the vices of his character were violently exaggerated. He was written down as a fraudulent upstart and an unscrupulous oppressor. To oust a Tálukdar was held by some young Settlement officers to be as great an achievement as to shoot a tiger; and it was done, too, with just as clear a conviction of the benefit conferred upon the district in which the animal prowled and marauded. It was done honestly, conscientiously, laboriously, as a deed entitling the doer to the gratitude of mankind. There was something thorough in it that wrung an unwilling admiration even from those who least approved. It was a grand levelling system, reducing everything to first principles and a delving Adam. Who was a gentleman and a Tálukdar, they asked, when these time-honoured Village Communities were first established on the soil? So the Settlement Officer, in pursuit of the great scheme of restitution, was fain to sweep out the Landed Gentry and to applaud the good thing he had done.*

And if one, by happy chance, was brought back by a saving hand, it was a mercy and a miracle: and the exception which proved the rule. The chances against him were many and great, for he had divers ordeals to pass through, and he seldom survived them all. It was the wont of many Settlement officers to assist the solution of knotty questions of proprietary right by a reference to personal character and conduct, so that when the claims of a great Tálukdar could not be altogether ignored,

* In sober official language, described by Lieutenant-Governor Robertson as "the prevailing, and perhaps excessive, readiness to reduce extensive properties into minute portions, and to substitute, whenever there was an opportunity, a village community for an individual landholder."

it was declared that he was a rogue or a fool—perhaps an atrocious compound of both—and that he had forfeited, by oppressions and cruelties, or by neglects scarcely less cruel, all claim to the compassion of the State. They gave the man a bad name, and straightway they went out to ruin him. A single illustration will suffice. One of the great landholders thus consigned to perdition was the Rájah of Mainpúrí. Of an old and honoured family, distinguished for loyalty and good service to the British Government, he was the Tálukdar of a large estate comprising nearly two hundred villages, and was amongst the most influential of the landed aristocracy of that part of the country. The Settlement officer was one of the ablest and best of his class. Fulfilling the great promise of his youth, he afterwards attained to the highest post in those very Provinces, an eminence from which he might serenely contemplate the fact, that the theory of the Dead-Level is against nature, and cannot be enforced without a convulsion. But, in the early days of which I am speaking, a great Tálukdar was to him what it was to others of the same school; and he represented that the Rájah, himself incompetent almost to the point of imbecility, was surrounded by agents of the worst character, who in his name had been guilty of all kinds of cruelty and oppression. Unfit as he was said to be for the management of so large an estate, it would, according to the prevailing creed, have been a righteous act to exclude him from it; but it was necessary, according to rule, to espy also a flaw in his tenure; so it was found that he had a just proprietary right in only about a fourth of the two hundred villages.* It was proposed, therefore, that his territorial greatness should to this extent be shorn down in the future Settlement, and that the bulk of the property should be settled with the village communities, whose rights, whatever they might originally have been, had lain for a century in abeyance.

Mr. G. Edmonstone.

Above the Settlement officer, in the ascending scale of our Administrative Agency, was the Commissioner; above the Commissioner, the Board of Revenue; above the Board of Revenue, the Lieutenant-Governor. In this cluster of gra-

* The exact number was 189, of which it was ruled that the Rájah could justly be recorded as proprietor only of 51. A money-compensation, in the shape of a percentage, was to be given him for the loss of the rest.

the Board caused some delay in the issue of the formal instructions of Government for the recognition of the Tálukdar, and before the settlement had been made with the Rajah, Robertson had resigned his post to another. That other was a man of the same school, with no greater passion than his predecessor for the subversion of the landed gentry; but sickness rendered his tenure of office too brief, and, before the close of the year, he was succeeded by one whose name is not to be mentioned without respect—the honoured son of an honoured father—the much-praised, much-lamented Thomason. He was as earnest and as honest as the men who had gone before him; but his strong and sincere convictions lay all in the other way. He was one of the chief teachers in the New School, and so strong was his faith in its doctrines that he regarded, with feelings akin to wondering compassion, as men whom God had given over to a strong delusion that they should believe a lie, all who still cherished the opinions which he had done so much to explode.* Supreme in the North-West Provinces, he found the case of the Mainpúri Rájah still formally before the Government. No final orders had been issued, so he issued them. The besom of the Settlement swept the great Tálukdar out of three-fourths of the estate, and the village proprietors were left to engage with Government for all the rest in his stead.

Mr. George Clerk.

1844.

Mr. Thomason.

It is admitted now, even by men who were personally concerned in this great work of the Settlement of Northern India, that it involved a grave political error. It was, undoubtedly, to convert into bitter enemies those whom sound policy would have made the friends and supporters of the State. Men of the Old School had seen plainly from the first that by these measures

* See, for example, his reflections on the contumacy of Mr. Boulderson, of whom Mr. Thomason says: "With much honesty of principle he is possessed of a constitution of mind which prevents him from readily adopting the principles of others, or acting upon their rules. A great part of his Indian career has been passed in opposition to the prevailing maxims of the day, and he finds himself conscientiously adverse to what has been done." With respect to these prevailing maxims, Mr. F. H. Robinson, of the Civil Service, in a pamphlet published in 1855, quotes the significant observation of an old Rasaldár of Gardener's Horse, who said to him: "No doubt the wisdom of the new gentlemen had shown them the folly and the ignorance of the gentlemen of the old time, on whom it pleased God, nevertheless, to bestow the government of India."

we were sowing broadcast the seeds of future trouble. Foremost among these was the veteran Director Tucker, who had been engaged in the first settlement of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, and who knew as well as any man what rights existed on our original assumption of the government of those territories. "The way to conciliate the peasantry," he wrote, "or to improve their condition, is not, I think, by dissolving the connection between them and the superior Tálukdars, or village Zamindars. The one we have, I fear, entirely displaced; but we cannot destroy the memory of their past or the consciousness of their present state. They were once prosperous, and their descendants must feel that they are no longer so. They are silent, because the natives of India are accustomed to endure and to submit to the will of their rulers; but if an enemy appear on our Western frontier, or if an insurrection unhappily take place, we shall find these Tálukdars, I apprehend, in the adverse ranks, and their ryots and retainers ranged under the same standard." And a quarter of a century later, one who had received the traditions of this school unbroken from Thomas Campbell Robertson, at whose feet he had sat, wrote that he had long been pointing out that, "although the old families were being displaced fast, we could not destroy the memory of the past, or dissolve the ancient connexion between them and their people; and said distinctly that, in the event of any insurrection occurring, we should find this great and influential body, through whom we can alone hope to keep under and control the rural masses, ranged against us on the side of the enemy, with their hereditary followers and retainers rallying around them, in spite of our attempts to separate their interests." "My warnings," he added, "were unheeded, and I was treated as an alarmist, who, having hitherto served only in the political department of the State, and being totally inexperienced in Revenue matters, could give no sound opinion on the subject." *

1832.

Warnings of this kind were, indeed, habitually disregarded; and the system, harsh in itself, was carried out, in some cases harshly and uncompromisingly, almost indeed as though there were a pleasure in doing it. It is true

Treatment of the native gentry.

* Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion. By William Edwards, B.C.S., Judge of Banaras, and late Magistrate and Collector of Badáon, in Rohilkhand.

that men deprived of their vested interests in great estates were recommended for money-payments direct from the Treasury; but this was no compensation for the loss of the land, with all the dignity derived from manorial rights and baronial privileges, and it was sometimes felt to be an insult. It was not even the fashion in those days to treat the Native Gentry with personal courtesy and conciliation. Some of the great masters of the school, men of the highest probity and benevolence, are said to have failed in this with a great failure, as lamentable as it was surprising. "In the matter of discourtesy to the native gentry," wrote Colonel Sleeman to John Colvin, "I can only say that Robert Mertins Bird insulted them, whenever he had an opportunity of doing so; and that Mr. Thomason was too apt to imitate him in this as in other things. Of course their example was followed by too many of their followers and admirers." *

Rent-free tenures.

And whilst all this was going on, there was another process in active operation by which the position of the privileged classes was still further reduced. There is not one of the many difficulties, which the acquisition of a new country entails upon us, more serious than that which arises from the multiplicity of privileges and prescriptions, territorial, and official, which, undetermined by any fixed principle, have existed under the Native Government which we have supplanted. Even at the outset of our administrative career it is difficult to deal with these irregular claims, but the difficulty is multiplied tenfold by delay. The action of our Government in all such cases should be prompt and unvarying. Justice or Injustice should be quick in its operation and equal in its effects. Accustomed to revolutions of empire and mutations of fortune, the native mind readily comprehends the idea of confiscation as the immediate result of conquest. Mercy and forbearance at such time are not expected, and are little understood. The descent of the strong hand of the conqueror upon all existing rights and privileges is looked for with a feeling of submission to inevitable fate; and at such a time no one wonders, scarcely any one complains, when the acts of a former Government are ignored, and its gifts are violently resumed.

* See Correspondence annexed to published edition of Sleeman's Oudh Diary. I have been told by men whose authority is entitled to respect, that the statement is to be received with caution.

Under former Governments, and, indeed, in the earlier days of our own, there had been large alienations of revenue in favour of persons who had rendered good service to the State, or had otherwise acquired the favour of the rulers of the land. These rent-free tenures were of many different kinds. A volume might be filled with an account of them. Some were burdened with conditions; some were not. Some were personal life-grants; some were hereditary and perpetual. Some were of old standing; some were of recent origin. Some had been fairly earned or justly acquired; others were the vile growth of fraud and corruption. They varied no less in the circumstances of their acquisition than in their intrinsic character and inherent conditions. But anyhow they were for some time a part of our system, and had come to be regarded as the rights of the occupants. Every year which saw men in undisturbed possession seemed to strengthen those rights. An inquiry, at the outset of our career of administration, into the validity of all such tenures would have been an intelligible proceeding. Doubtless, indeed, it was expected. But years passed, and the danger seemed to have passed with them. Nay, more, the inactivity, seemingly the indifference, of the British Government, with respect to those whom we found in possession, emboldened others to fabricate similar rights, and to lay claim to immunities which they had never enjoyed under their native masters.

Bengal.

In Bengal this manufacture of rent-free tenures was carried on to an extent that largely diminished the legitimate revenue of the country. A very considerable portion of these tenures was the growth of the transition-period immediately before and immediately after our assumption of the Diwáni, or Revenue-Administration, of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá. At the time of the great Permanent Settlement the rent-free holders were called upon to register their claims to exemption from the payment of the Government dues, and their grounds of exemption; and as they still remained in possession they believed that their rights and privileges had been confirmed to them. The Permanent Settlement, indeed, was held to be the Magna Charta of the privileged classes; and for more than forty years men rejoiced in their freeholds, undisturbed by any thoughts of invalidity of title or insecurity of tenure.

Resumption operation.

But after this lapse of years, when Fraud itself might reasonably have pleaded a statute of limita-

tions, the English revenue-officer awoke to a sense of the wrongs endured by his Government. So much revenue alienated: so many worthless sinecurists living in indolent contentment at the cost of the State, enjoying vast privileges and immunities, to the injury of the great mass of the People. Surely it was a scandal and a reproach! Then well-read, clever secretaries, with a turn for historical illustration, discovered a parallel between this grievous state of things in Bengal and that which preceded the great revolution in France, when the privileges of the old nobility pressed out the very life of the nation, until the day of reckoning and retribution came, with a more dire tyranny of its own. Viewed in this light, it was held to be an imperative duty to Colbertise the Lakhirájdars of the Lower Provinces.* So the resumption-officer was let loose upon the land. Titles were called for; proofs of validity were to be established, to the satisfaction of the Government functionary. But in families, which seldom last a generation without seeing their houses burnt down, and in a climate which during some months of the year is made up of incessant rains, and during others of steamy exhalations—where the devouring damp, and the still more devouring insect, consume all kinds of perishable property, even in stout-walled houses, it would have been strange if genuine documentary evidence had been forthcoming at the right time. It was an awful thing, after so many years of undisturbed possession, to be called upon to establish proofs, when the only proof was actual incumbency. A reign of terror then commenced. And if, when thus threatened, the weak Bengali had not sometimes betaken himself in self-defence to the ready weapons of forgery, he must have changed his nature under the influence of his fears. That what ensued may properly be described as wholesale confiscation is not to be doubted. Expert

* "In a memoir of the Great Colbert I read the following words, which are exactly descriptive of the nature of the pretensions of the great mass of the Lakhirájdars, and of the present measures of the Government: 'Under the pernicious system which exempted the nobility from payment of direct taxes, a great number of persons had fraudulently assumed titles and claimed rank, while another class had obtained immunity from taxation by the prostitution of Court favour, or the abuse of official privileges. These cases Colbert caused to be investigated, and those who failed in making out a legal claim to immunity were compelled to pay their share of the public burdens, to the relief of the labouring classes, on whom nearly the whole weight of taxation fell.'"—*See Letters of* GAUNTLET, *addressed to the Calcutta Papers of* 1838

young revenue-officers settled scores of cases in a day; and families, who had held possession of inherited estates for long years, and never doubted the security of their tenure, found themselves suddenly deprived of their freeholds and compelled to pay or to go. That the State had been largely defrauded, at some time or other, is more than probable. Many, it is admitted, were in possession who had originally no good title to the exemption they enjoyed. But many also, whose titles were originally valid, could produce no satisfactory evidence of their validity: so the fraudulent usurper and the rightful possessor were involved in one common ruin.

The success of these operations was loudly vaunted at the time. A social revolution had been accomplished, to the manifest advantage of the State, and at no cost, it was said, of popular discontent. The Bengali is proverbially timid, patient, and long-suffering. But there were far-seeing men who said, even at that time, that though a strong Government might do this with impunity in those lower provinces, they must beware how they attempt similar spoliation in other parts of India, especially in those from which the Native Army was recruited. If you do, it was prophetically said, you will some day find yourselves holding India only with European troops. The probability of alienating by such measures the loyalty of the military classes was earnestly discussed in the European journals of Calcutta; * and it was said, by those who defended

* The following, written a quarter of a century ago, affords a curious glimpse of the apprehensions even then entertained by far-seeing men: "We would just hint by the way to those who have planned this very extraordinary attack upon vested rights, that the Sipáhis are almost all landholders, many of them Brahmans, whose families are supported by the charitable foundations which it is now sought to confiscate and destroy. The alarm has not yet, we believe, spread to the Army, but it has not been without its causes of complaints; and we would very calmly and respectfully put it to our rulers, whether it is wise or prudent to run the risk to which this Resumption measure would sooner or later infallibly lead. The native soldier has long been in the habit of placing implicit reliance upon British faith and honour; but let the charm once be broken, let the confiscation of rent-free land spread to those provinces out of which our Army is recruited, and the consequences may be that we shall very soon have to trust for our security to British troops alone. The Government may then learn rather late that revenue is not the only thing needful, and that their financial arithmetic, instead of making twice two equal to one, as Swift says was the case in Ireland, may end by extracting from the same process of multiplication just nothing at all."—*Englishman*, November 2, 1838.

the measure, that it was not intended to extend these resumption operations to other parts of the country. But scarcely any part of the country escaped; scarcely any race of men, holding rent-free estates of any kind, felt secure in the possession of rights and privileges which they had enjoyed under Mughul and Maráthá rule, and had believed that they could still enjoy under the Ráj of the Christian ruler.

North-West Provinces.

In the North-West Provinces it was part of the duty of the Settlement officer to inquire into rent-free tenures, and to resume or to release from assessment the lands thus held. The feelings with which the task imposed upon him was regarded varied with the character and the opinions of the functionary thus employed; but whilst those who were disposed to look compassionately upon doubtful claims, or believed that it would be sound policy to leave men in undisturbed possession even of what might have been in the first instance unrighteously acquired, were few, the disciples of Bird and Thomason, who viewed all such alienations of revenue as unmixed evils, and considered that any respect shown to men who were described as "drones who do no good in the public hive" was an injury done to the tax-paying community at large, were many and powerful, and left their impression on the land. Rejoicing in the great principle of the Dead-Level, the Board commonly supported the views of the resumptionist; and but for the intervention of Mr. Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor, there would scarcely, at the end of the Settlement operations, have been a rent-free tenure in the land. There was sometimes a show of justice on the side of resumption, for the immunity had been granted, in the first instance, as payment for service no longer demanded, or what had been originally merely a life-grant had assumed the character of an hereditary assignment. Perhaps there was sometimes more than suspicion that in unsettled times, when there was a sort of scramble for empire, privileges of this kind had been fabricated or usurped; but in other instances strong proofs of validity were ignored, and it has been freely stated, even by men of their own order, that these earnest-minded civilians "rejected royal firmans and other authentic documents," and brought upon the great rent-roll of the Company lands which had been for many generations free from assessment. Nay, even the highest authority, in the great Settlement epoch, declared that "the Settlement officer swept up, without inquiry,

every patch of unregistered land; even those exempted by a subsequent order, which did not come out until five-sixths of the tenures had been resumed." In one district, that of Farrukhábád, "the obligations of a treaty and the direct orders of Government were but lightly dealt with; and in all, a total disregard was evinced for the acts even of such men as Warren Hastings and Lord Lake."* In every case what was done was done conscientiously, in the assured belief that it was for the general good of the people; but the very knowledge that was most vaunted, a knowledge of the institutions and the temper of the natives, was that which they most lacked. They were wrecked upon the dangerous coast of Little Learning.

There were, however, it has been said, some men engaged in those great Settlement operations who were not smitten with this unappeasable earth-hunger, and who took altogether another view both of the duty and of the policy of the State. Mr. Mansel, of whose eager desire, so honourably evinced at a later period, to uphold the Native States of India I have already spoken, was the principal exponent of these exceptional opinions. "If it be of importance," he wrote, in his Report on the Settlement of the Agra District, "to conciliate the affections of the people, as well as to govern by the action of naked penal laws; if it be important that the natural tendency of every part of native society in these provinces, to sink into one wretched level of poverty and ignorance, should, as a principle, be checked as far as possible by the acts of Government; if it be important that the pride of ancestry and nobility, the valour of past times, and the national character of a country, should be cherished in recollection, as ennobling feelings to the human mind, I know of no act to which I could point with more satisfaction, as a zealous servant of Government, than the generous manner in which the restoration of the family of the Badáwar Rájah to rank and fortune was made by the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra; and I cannot refrain from allowing myself to echo, for the inhabitants of this part of the country, that feeling, in a report of necessity, largely connected with the welfare and happiness of the district of Agra." Mr. Robertson had granted the Badáwar Jaghir to the adopted son of the deceased Rájah, and it was the recognition of this adoption

* Minute of Mr. Robertson, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, quoted in Dispatch of the Court of Directors, August 13, 1851.

which so rejoiced the heart of the sympathising Settlement officer.

As the events of which I am about to write occurred, for the most part, in Northern India, it is to the disturbing causes in that part of the country that the introductory section of this book is mainly devoted. But before it passes altogether away from the subject of Resumption, something should be said about the operations of that great confiscatory Tribunal known as the Inám Commission of Bombay. This was but the supplement of a series of measures, of which it would take a long time to write in detail. A great part of the territory, now constituting the Presidency of Bombay, was in 1817 conquered from the Peshwá. With conquest came the old difficulty, of which I have spoken *—the difficulty of dealing with the privileges and prescriptions, the vested interests of all kinds, territorial and official, derived from the Maráthá Government. As in Bengal and in the North-Western Provinces, these difficulties were greatly aggravated by delay. Had we instituted a searching inquiry at once, and resumed every doubtful tenure; had we cancelled even the undoubted grants of former governments, and suddenly annulled all existing privileges, such proceedings in the eyes of the people would have been the intelligible tyranny of the conqueror, and, at all events, in accordance with the custom of the country. But our very desire to deal justly and generously with these privileged classes generated delayed and unequal action. At different times, and in different parts of Western India, these old alienations of Revenue were dealt with after different fashions; and it was a source of bitter discontent that, under like circumstances, claims were settled by Government with far greater rigour in one part of the country than in another.

The Inám Commission of Bombay.

Years passed, various regulations were framed, for the most part of restricted operation; and still, after the country had been for more than a third of a century under British rule, the great question of alienated revenue had only been partially adjusted. So in 1852 an Act was passed, which empowered a little body of English officers, principally of the military profession—men, it was truly said, "not well versed in the principles of law, and wholly unpractised in the conduct of judicial

* *Ante*, page 121.

inquiries"—to exercise arbitrary jurisdiction over thousands of estates, many of them held by men of high family, proud of their lineage, proud of their ancestral privileges, who had won what they held by the sword, and had no thought by any other means of maintaining possession. In the Southern Maráthá country there were large numbers of these Jaghírdárs, who had never troubled themselves about title-deeds, who knew nothing about rules of evidence, and who had believed that long years of possession were more cogent than any intricacies of law. If they had ever held written proofs of the validity of their tenures, they had seldom been so provident as to preserve them. But, perhaps, they had never had better proof than the memory of a fierce contest, in the great *gardí-ki-wakt*, or time of trouble, which had preluded the dissolution of the Maráthá power in Western India, and placed the white man on the Throne of the Peshwá.* Year after year had passed, one generation had followed another in undisturbed possession, and the great seal of Time stood them in stead of the elaborate technicalities of the Conveyancer. But the Inám Commission was established. The fame of it went abroad throughout the Southern Maráthá country. From one village to another passed the appalling news that the Commissioner had appeared, had called for titles that could not be produced, and that nothing but a general confiscation of property was likely to result from the operations of this mysterious Tribunal. "Each day," it has been said, "produced its list of victims; and the good fortunes of those who escaped but added to the pangs of the crowd who came forth from the shearing-house shorn to the skin, unable to

* See the admirably-written memorial of Mr. G. B. Seton-Karr: "Chiefs, who had won their estates by the sword, had not been careful to fence them in with a paper barrier, which they felt the next successful adventurer would sweep away as unceremoniously as themselves. Instead of parchments, they transmitted arms and retainers, with whose aid they had learnt to consider mere titles superfluous, as without it they were contemptible. In other instances, men of local influence and energetic character having grasped at the lands which lay within their reach in the general scramble which preceded the downfall of the Peshwá's Government, had transmitted their acquisitions to the children, fortified by no better titles than entries in the village account-books, which a closer examination showed to be recent or spurious. Roused from the dreams of thirty years, these proprietors of precarious title, or of no title at all, found themselves suddenly brought face to face with an apparatus, which, at successive strokes, peeled away their possessions with the harsh precision of the planing machine."

work, ashamed to beg, condemned to penury." * The titles of no less than thirty-five thousand estates, great and small, were called for by the Commission, and during the first five years of its operations, three-fifths of them were confiscated.† 1852–57.

Whilst the operations of the Revenue Department were thus spreading alarm among the privileged classes in all parts of the country, the Judicial Department was doing its duty as a serviceable ally in the great war of extermination. Many of the old landed proprietors were stripped to the skin by the decrees of our civil courts. The sale of land in satisfaction of these decrees was a process to which recourse was often had among a people inordinately addicted to litigation. We must not regard it altogether with English eyes; for the Law had often nothing else to take. There was many a small landed proprietor whose family might have been established for centuries on a particular estate, with much pride of birth and affection for his ancestral lands, but possessing movable goods and chattels not worth more than a few rupees. He might have owned a pair of small bullocks and a rude country cart consisting of two wheels and a few bamboos, but beyond such aids to husbandry as these, he had nothing but a drinking-vessel, a few cooking-pots, and the blankets which kept the dews off at night. Justice in his case might not be satisfied without a surrender of his interests in the land, which constituted the main portion of his wealth.‡ So a large number of estates every year were put up to sale, under the decrees of the courts, in satisfaction of debts sometimes only of a few shillings, and bought by new men, perhaps from different parts of the country, not improbably the agents

Operation of the Civil Courts.

* Memorial of G. B. Seton-Karr.

† Ibid.

‡ I have stated here the principle upon which the law was based. But I believe that in many cases no pains were taken to ascertain in the first instance what were the movable goods of the debtor. Recourse was had to the register of landed property, even when the debt amounted to no more than four or five rupees. "I have seen," says an officer of the Bengal Civil Service, in a Memorandum before me, "estates put up for sale for four rupees (eight shillings), which appears to me just the same as if an English grocer, getting a decree in a small-debt court against a squire for half a sovereign, put up his estate in Cheshire for the same, instead of realising the debt by the sale of his silk umbrella."

or representatives of astute native functionaries from the lower provinces; whilst the ancient proprietors, still rooted to the soil, shrank into small farmers or under-tenants on their old ancestral domains. Thus a revolution of landed property was gradually brought about by means of English application, which, acting coincidentally with the other agencies of which I have spoken, swelled the number of the disaffected, dangerous classes, who traced their downfall to the operations of British rule, and sullenly bided their time for the recovery of what they had lost, in some new revolutionary epoch.

This general system of depression, which, thus assuming many different forms and exercising itself in many different ways, struck with uniform precision at the most cherished privileges of the upper classes, had not its origin in the fertile brain of Lord Dalhousie. He only confirmed and extended it; confirmed it in our older provinces, and extended it to those which he had himself acquired. In the Panjáb it sorely disquieted some few of our more chivalrous English officers connected with the Administration,* and it was carried into the Oudh dominions, as will hereafter be shown, with a recklessness which in time brought down upon us a terrible retribution. Every new acquisition of territory made the matter much worse. Not merely because the privileged classes were in those territories struck down, but because the extension of the British Ráj gradually so contracted the area on which men of high social position, expelled by our system from the Company's provinces, could find profitable and honourable employment, that it seemed as though every outlet for native enterprise and ambition were about to be closed against them. It was this, indeed, that made the great difference between resumptions of rent-free estates under the Native Governments and under our own. It has been said that under the former there was no security of tenure; and it is

* Sir Herbert Edwardes, in a Memorandum quoted by Mr. Charles Raikes in his graphic "Notes of the Revolt of the North-West Provinces of India," says of Arthur Cocks, that he "imbibed Sir Henry Lawrence's feelings, and became greatly attached to the chiefs and people. He hardly stayed a year after annexation, and left the Panjáb because he could not bear to see the fallen state of the old officials and Sirdars.' Of Henry Lawrence himself, Mr. Raikes says: "He fought every losing battle for the old chiefs and Jaghirdárs with entire disregard for his own interest, and at last left the Panjáb, to use Colonel Edwardes's words, dented all over with defeats and disappointments, honourable scars in the eyes of the bystanders."

true that the Native Princes did not consider themselves bound to maintain the grants of their predecessors, and often arbitrarily resumed them. But the door of honourable and lucrative employment was not closed against the sufferers. All the great offices of the State, civil and military, were open to the children of the soil. But it was not so in our British territories. There the dispossessed holder, no longer suffered to be an unprofitable drone, was not permitted to take a place among the working bees of the hive. And what place was there left for him, in which he could serve under other masters? We had no room for him under us, and we left no place for him away from us. And so we made dangerous enemies of a large number of influential persons, amongst whom were not only many nobles of royal or princely descent, many military chiefs, with large bodies of retainers, and many ancient landholders for whom a strong feudal veneration still remained among the agricultural classes, but numbers of the Brahmanical, or priestly order, who had been supported by the alienated revenue which we resumed, and who turned the power which they exercised over the minds of others to fatal account in fomenting popular discontent, and instilling into the minds of the people the poison of religious fear.

The Priesthood.

Other measures were in operation at the same time, the tendency of which was to disturb the minds and to inflame the hatred of the Priesthood. It seemed as though a great flood of innovation were about to sweep away all their powers and their privileges. The pale-faced Christian knight, with the great Excalibar of Truth in his hand, was cleaving right through all the most cherished fictions and superstitions of Brahmanism. A new generation was springing up, without faith, without veneration; an inquiring, doubting, reasoning race, not to be satisfied with absurd doctrines or captivated by grotesque fables. The literature of Bacon and Milton was exciting a new appetite for Truth and Beauty; and the exact sciences of the West, with their clear, demonstrable facts and inevitable deductions, were putting to shame the physical errors of Hinduism. A spirit of inquiry had been excited, and it was little likely ever to be allayed. It was plain that the inquirers were exalting the Professor above the Pandit, and that the new teacher was fast displacing the old.

Rightly to understand the stake for which the Brahman was playing, and with the loss of which he was now threatened, the reader must keep before him the fact that Brahmanism is the *most monstrous system of interference and oppression that the world has ever yet seen, and that it could be maintained only by* ignorance and superstition of the grossest kind. The people had been taught to believe that in all the daily concerns of life Brahmanical ministrations were essential to worldly success. The Deity, it was believed, could be propitiated only by money-payments to this favoured race of holy men. "Every form and ceremony of religion," it has been said; "all the public festivals; all the accidents and concerns of life; the revolutions of the heavenly bodies; the superstitious fears of the people; births, sicknesses, marriages, misfortunes; death; a future state—have all been seized as sources of revenue to the Brahmans." "The farmer does not reap his harvest without paying a Brahman to perform some ceremony; a tradesman cannot begin business without a fee to a Brahman; a fisherman cannot build a new boat, nor begin to fish in a spot which he has farmed, without a ceremony and a fee."* "The Brahman," says another and more recent writer, "does not only stand in a hierarchical, but also in the highest aristocratical position; and he has an authoritative voice in all pursuits of industry. All processes in other arts, as well as agriculture, are supposed to have been prescribed and imparted through the Brahmans. Every newly-commenced process of business, every new machine, or even repair of an old one, has to go through the ceremony of 'pujah,' with a feeing of the Brahman."† And as the Brahman was thus the controller of all the ordinary business concerns of his countrymen, so also was he the depositary of all the learning of the country, and the regulator of all the intellectual pursuits of the people. There was, indeed, no such thing among them as purely secular education. "It is a marked and peculiar feature in the character of Hinduism," says another writer, himself by birth a Hindu, "that instead of confining itself within the proper and lawful bounds prescribed to every theological system, it interferes with and treats of every department of secular knowledge which human genius has ever invented; so

* Ward on the Hindus.

† Jeffreys on the "British Army in India," Appendix, in which there is much interesting and valuable matter.

that grammar, geography, physics, law, medicine, metaphysics, &c., do each form as essential a part of Hinduism as any religious topic with which it is concerned. . . . In their religious works they have treated of all the branches of secular knowledge known among them, in a regular, systematic manner; and have given them out to the world in a tone of absolute authority from which there could be no appeal."* But the English had established a Court of Appeal of the highest order, and Brahmanism was being continually cast in it. In a word, the whole hierarchy of India saw their power, their privileges, and their perquisites rapidly crumbling away from them, and they girded themselves up to arrest the devastation.

All this had been going on for years; but the progress of enlightenment had been too slow, and its manifestations too little obtrusive, greatly to alarm the sacerdotal mind. As long as the receptacles of this new wisdom were merely a few clever boys in the great towns, and the manhood of the nation was still saturated and sodden with the old superstition, Brahmanism might yet flourish. But when these boys grew up in time to be heads of families, rejoicing in what they called their freedom from prejudice, laughing to scorn their ancestral faith as a bundle of old wives' fables, eating meat and drinking wine, and assuming some at least of the distinguishing articles of Christian apparel, it was clear that a very serious peril was beginning to threaten the ascendency of the Priesthood. They saw that a reformation of this kind, once commenced, would work its way in time through all the strata of society. They saw that, as new provinces were one after another brought under British rule, the new light must diffuse itself more and more, until there would scarcely be a place for Hinduism to lurk unmolested. And some at least, confounding cause and effect, began to argue, that all this annexation and absorption was brought about for the express purpose of overthrowing the ancient faiths of the country, and establishing a new religion in their place.

Education.

Every monstrous lie exploded, every abominable practice suppressed, was a blow struck at the Priesthood; for all these monstrosities and abominations had their root in Hinduism, and could not be eradicated without sore disturbance and confusion of the soil. The murder of

* *Calcutta Review*, vol. xi. Article: "Physical Errors of Hinduism."

women on the funeral pile, the murder of little children in the Zenana, the murder of the sick and the aged on the banks of the river, the murder of human victims, reared and fattened for the sacrifice, were all religious institutions, from which the Priesthood derived either profit, power, or both. Nay, even the wholesale strangling of unsuspecting travellers was sanctified and ceremonialised by religion. Now all these cruel rites had been suppressed, and, what was still worse in the eyes of the Brahmans, the foul superstitions which nurtured them were fast disappearing from the land. Authority might declare their wickedness, and still they might exist as part and parcel of the faith of the people. But when Reason demonstrated their absurdity, and struck conviction into the very heart of the nation, there was an end of both the folly and the crime. The Law might do much, but Education would assuredly do much more to sweep away all these time-honoured superstitions. Education, pure and simple in its secularity, was quite enough in itself to hew down this dense jungle of Hinduism; but when it was seen that the functions of the English schoolmaster and of the Christian priest were often united in the same person, and that high officers of the State were present at examinations conducted by chaplains or missionaries, a fear arose lest even secular education might be the mask of proselytism, and so the Brahmans began to alarm the minds of the elder members of the Hindu community, who abstained, under priestly influence, from openly countenancing what they had not the energy boldly to resist.*

And every year the danger increased. Every year were there manifestations of a continually increasing desire to emancipate the natives of India from the gross superstitions which enchained them. One common feeling moved alike the English Government and the English community. In other matters of State-policy there might be essential changes, but in this there was no change. One Governor might replace another, but only to evince an increased hostility to the great Baal of Hinduism. And in no man was there less regard for time-honoured abominations and venerable absurdities—in no man did the zeal of

* The English journalists sometimes remarked in their reports of these school-examinations upon the absence of the native gentry—*e.g.*: "We cannot help expressing great surprise at the absence of natives of influence."—*Bengal Hurkaru*, March 14, 1853.

iconoclasm work more mightily than in Lord Dalhousie. During no former administration had the vested interests of Brahmanism in moral and material error been more ruthlessly assailed. There was nothing systematic in all this. Almost, indeed, might it be said that it was unconscious. It was simply the manifestation of such love as any clear-sighted, strong-headed man may be supposed to have for truth above error, for intelligent progress above ignorant stagnation. From love of this kind, from the assured conviction that it was equally humane and politic to substitute the strength and justice of British administration for what he regarded as the effete tyrannies of the East, had emanated the annexations which had distinguished his rule. And as he desired for the good of the people to extend the territorial rule of Great Britain, so he was eager also to extend her moral rule, and to make those people subject to the powers of light rather than of darkness. And so he strove mightily to extend among them the blessings of European civilisation, and the Priesthood stood aghast at the sight of the new things, moral and material, by which they were threatened.

Many and portentous were these menaces. Not only was Government Education, in a more systematised and portentous shape than before, rapidly extending its network over the whole male population of the country, but even the fastnesses of the female apartments were not secure against the intrusion of the new learning and new philosophy of the West. England had begun to take account of its shortcomings, and among all the reproaches heaped upon the Company, none had been so loud or so general as the cry that, whilst they spent millions on War, they grudged hundreds for purposes of Education. So, in obedience to this cry, instructions had been sent out to India, directing larger, more comprehensive, more systematic measures for the instruction of the people, and authorising increased expenditure upon them. Whilst great Universities were to be established, under the immediate charge of the Government, the more humble missionary institutions were to be aided by grants of public money, and no effort was to be spared that could conduce to the spread of European knowledge. It was plain to the comprehension of the guardians of Eastern learning, that what had been done to unlock the floodgates of the West would soon appear to be as nothing in comparison with the great tide of European civilisation which was about to be poured out upon them.

Most alarming of all were the endeavours made, during Lord Dalhousie's administration, to penetrate the Zenana with our new learning and our new customs. The English at the large Presidency towns began to systematise their efforts for the emancipation of the female mind from the utter ignorance which had been its birthright, and the wives and daughters of the white men began to aid in the work, cheered and encouraged by the sympathies of their sisters at home. For the first time, the education of Hindu and Muhammadan females took, during the administration of Lord Dalhousie, a substantial recognised shape. Before it had been merely a manifestation of missionary zeal addressed to the conversion of a few orphans and castaways. But now, if not the immediate work of the Government in its corporate capacity, it was the pet project and the especial charge of a member of the Government, and, on his death, passed into the hands of the Governor-General himself, and afterwards was adopted by the Company's Government. Some years before, the Priesthood, secure in the bigotry and intolerance of the heads of families, might have laughed these efforts to scorn. But now young men, trained under English Professors, were becoming fathers and masters, sensible of the great want of enlightened female companionship, and ill-disposed to yield obedience to the dogmas of the Priests. So great, indeed, was this yearning after something more attractive and more satisfying than the inanity of the Zenana, that the courtesans of the Calcutta Bazaars taught themselves to play on instruments, to sing songs, and to read poetry, that thereby they might lure from the dreary environments of their vapid homes the very flower of Young Bengal.

Female Education.

Mr. Bethune.

About the same time the wedge of another startling innovation was being driven into the very heart of Hindu Society. Among the many cruel wrongs to which the womanhood of the nation was subjected was the institution which forbade a bereaved wife ever to re-marry. The widow who did not burn was condemned to perpetual chastity. Nay, it has been surmised that the burning inculcated in the old religious writings of the Hindus was no other than that which, centuries afterwards, the great Christian teacher forbade, saying that it is better to marry than to burn. Be this as it may, the re-marriage of Hindu widows was opposed both to the creeds and the customs of the

Re-marriage of Hindu Widows.

land. It was an evil and a cruel thing itself, and the prolific source of other evils. Evil and cruel would it have been in any country and under any institutions, but where mere children are married, often to men advanced in years, and are left widows, in tender youth, when they have scarcely looked upon their husbands, its cruelty is past counting. To the more enlightened Hindus, trained in our English colleges and schools, the evils of this prohibition were so patent and so distressing, that they were fain to see it abrogated by law. One of their number wrote a clever treatise in defence of the re-marriage of widows, and thousands signed a petition, in which a belief was expressed that perpetual widowhood was not enjoined by the Hindu scriptures. But the orthodox party, strong in texts, greatly outnumbered, and, judged by the standard of Hinduism, greatly outargued them. The Law and the Prophets were on their side. It was plain that the innovation would inflict another deadly blow on the old Hindu law of inheritance. Already had dire offence been given to the orthodoxy of the land by the removal of those disabilities which forbade all who had forsaken their ancestral faith to inherit ancestral property. A law had been passed, declaring the abolition of "so much of the old law or usage as inflicted on any person forfeiture of rights or property, by reason of his or her renouncing, or having been excluded from, the communion of any religion." Against this the old Hindus had vehemently protested, not without threats, as a violation of the pledges given by the British Government to the natives of India; pledges, they said, issued in an hour of weakness and revoked in an hour of strength.* But Lord Dalhousie had emphatically recorded his opinion, "that it is the duty of the State to keep in its own hands the right of regulating succession to property," and the Act had been passed. And now there was further authoritative interference on the

* The Bengal Memorial said: "Your memorialists will not conceal that from the moment the proposed Act becomes a part of the law applicable to Hindus, that confidence which they hitherto felt in the paternal character of their British rulers will be most materially shaken. No outbreak, of course, is to be dreaded; but the ctive spirit of fervent loyalty to their sovereign will be changed into sullen submission to their will, and obedience to their power." The Madras Memorial was couched in much stronger language. It denounced the measure as a direct act of tyranny, and said that the British Government, "treading the path of oppression," "would well deserve what it will assuredly obtain—the hatred and detestation of the oppressed."

part of the State, for it was proposed to bestow equal rights of inheritance on the offspring of what the old-school Hindus declared to be an illicit, God-proscribed connection. This, however, was but a part of the evil. Here was another step towards the complete emancipation of woman; and Hindu orthodoxy believed, or professed to believe, that if widows were encouraged to marry new husbands instead of burning with the corpses of the old, wives would be induced to make themselves widows by poisoning or otherwise destroying their lords. It was apprehended, too—and not altogether without reason*—that the re-marriage of Hindu widows would soon be followed by a blow struck at Hindu polygamy, especially in its worst but most honoured form of Kulinism; and so the Brahmans, discomfited and alarmed by these innovations, past, present, and prospective, strove mightily to resist the tide, and to turn the torrent of destruction back upon their enemies.†

The Railway and the Telegraph.

Nor was it only by the innovations of moral progress that the hierarchy of India were alarmed and offended. The inroads and encroachments of physical science were equally distasteful and disquieting. A privileged race of men, who had been held in veneration as the depositaries of all human knowledge, were suddenly shown to be as feeble and impotent as babes and sucklings. It was no mere verbal demonstration; the arrogant self-assertion of the white man, which the Hindu Priesthood could contradict or explain away. There were no means of contradicting or explaining away the railway cars, which travelled, without horses

* See the following passage of a speech delivered by Mr. Barnes Peacock, in the Legislative Council, July 19, 1856: "There was a great distinction between preventing a man from doing that which his religion directed him to do, and preventing him from doing that which his religion merely allowed him to do. If a man were to say that his religion did not forbid polygamy, and therefore that he might marry as many wives as he pleased, when it was impossible for him to carry out the contract of marriage, it would be no interference with his religion for the Legislature to say that the marrying of a hundred wives, and the subsequent desertion of them, was an injury to society, and therefore that it should be illegal to do so. He" (Mr. Peacock) "maintained that it was the duty of the Legislature, in such a case, to prevent him from doing that which his religion merely permitted, but did not command him to do."

† The "Bill to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows," though introduced and discussed during the administration of Lord Dalhousie, was not finally passed till after his retirement. It received the assent of Lord Canning in July, 1856.

or bullocks, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, or the electric wires, which in a few minutes carried a message across the breadth of a whole province.

These were facts that there was no gainsaying. He who ran might read. The prodigious triumphs over time and space achieved by these "fire-carriages" and "lightning-posts" put to shame the wisdom of the Brahmans, and seemed to indicate a command over the supernatural agencies of the Unseen World, such as the Pandits of the East could never attain or simulate. They, who for their own ends had imparted a sacred character to new inventions, and had taught their disciples that all improvements in art and science were derived from the Deity through their especial intercession, and were to be inaugurated with religious ceremonies attended with the usual distribution of largesses to the priests, now found that the white men could make the very elements their slaves, and call to their aid miraculous powers undreamt of in the Brahmanical philosophy. Of what use was it any longer to endeavour to persuade the people that the new knowledge of the West was only a bundle of shams and impostures, when any man might see the train come in at a given moment, and learn at Banáras how many pounds of flour were sold for the rupee that morning in the bazaars of Dehli and Calcutta?

To the introduction into India of these mysterious agencies the Hour and the Man were alike propitious. When Lord Dalhousie went out to India, England was just recovering from the effects of that over-activity of speculation which had generated such a disturbance of the whole financial system of the country. She had ceased to project lines of Railway between towns without Traffic, and through countries without Population, and had subsided, after much suffering, into a healthy state of reasonable enterprise, carefully estimating both her wants and her resources. As President of the Board of Trade, Dalhousie had enjoyed the best opportunities of acquainting himself with the principles and with the details of the great question of the day, at the one central point to which all information converged, and he had left England with the full determination, God willing, not to leave the country of his adoption until he had initiated the construction of great trunk-roads of iron between all the great centres of Government and of Commerce, and had traversed, at railway speed, some at least of their first stages. A little while before, the idea of an Indian railway

had, in the estimation of the greater number of English residents, been something speculative and chimerical, encouraged only by visionaries and enthusiasts. A few far-seeing men, foremost among whom was Macdonald Stephenson, predicted their speedy establishment, and with the general acceptance of the nation; but even after Dalhousie had put his hand to the work, and the Company had responded to his efforts, it was the more general belief that railway communication in India would be rather a concern of Government, useful in the extreme for military purposes, than a popular institution supplying a national want. It was thought that Indolence, Avarice, and Superstition would keep the natives of the country from flocking to the Railway Station. But with a keener appreciation of the inherent power of so demonstrable a benefit to make its own way, even against these moral obstructions, Dalhousie had full faith in the result. He was right. The people now learnt to estimate at its full worth the great truth that Time is Money; and having so learned, they were not to be deterred from profiting by it by any tenderness of respect for the feelings of their spiritual guides.

That the fire-carriage on the iron road was a heavy blow to the Brahmanical Priesthood is not to be doubted. The lightning post, which sent invisible letters through the air and brought back answers, from incredible distances, in less time than an ordinary messenger could bring them from the next street, was a still greater marvel and a still greater disturbance. But it was less patent and obtrusive. The one is the natural complement of the other; and Dalhousie, aided by the genius of O'Shaughnessy, had soon spread a network of electric wires across the whole length and breadth of the country. It was a wise thing to do; a right thing to do; but it was alarming and offensive to the Brahmanical mind. It has been said, that as soon as we had demonstrated that the earth is a sphere revolving on its axis, there was an end to the superstitions of Hinduism. And so there was—in argument, but not in fact. The Brahmanical teachers insisted that the new doctrines of Western civilisation were mere specious inventions, with no groundwork of eternal truth, and as their disciples could not bring the test of their senses to such inquiries as these, they succumbed to authority rather than to reason, or perhaps lapsed into a state of bewildering doubt. But material experiments, so palpable and portentous that they might be seen at a distance of many

miles, convinced whilst they astounded. The most ignorant and unreasoning of men could see that the thing was done. They knew that Brahmanism had never done it. They saw plainly the fact, that there were wonderful things in the world which their own Priests could not teach them—of which, indeed, with all their boasted wisdom, they had never dreamt; and from that time the Hindu Hierarchy lost half its power, for the People lost half their faith.

Caste.

But clear as was all this, and alarming as were the prospects thus unfolded to the Pandits, there was something more than this needed to disturb the popular mind. Hinduism might be assailed; Hinduism might be disproved; and still men might go about their daily business without a fear for the future or a regret for the past. But there was something about which they disturbed themselves much more than about the abstract truths of their religion. The great institution of Caste was an ever-present reality. It entered into the commonest concerns of life. It was intelligible to the meanest understanding. Every man, woman, and child knew what a terrible thing it would be to be cast out from the community of the brotherhood, and condemned to live apart, abhorred of men and forsaken by God. If, then, the people could be taught that the English by some insidious means purposed to defile the Hindus, and to bring them all to a dead level of one-caste or of no-caste, a great rising of the Natives might sweep the Foreigners into the sea. This was an obvious line of policy; but it was not a policy for all times. It needed opportunity for its successful development. Equally patient and astute, the Brahman was content to bide his time rather than to risk anything by an inopportune demonstration. The English were loud in their professions of toleration, and commonly cautious in their practice. Still it was only in the nature of things that they should some day make a false step.

The Missing System in Gaols.

As the Brahman thus lay in wait, eager for his opportunity to strike, he thought he espied, perhaps in an unexpected quarter, a safe point of attack. It required some monstrous invention, very suitable to troubled times, but only to be circulated with success after the popular mind, by previous excitement, had been prepared to receive it, to give any colour of probability to a report that the Government had laid a plot for the defilement of the whole mass of the people. But there were certain classes

with which Government had a direct connection, and whose bodies and souls were in the immediate keeping of the State. Among these were the inmates of our gaols. As these people were necessarily dependent upon Government for their daily food, it appeared to be easy, by a well-devised system of Prison Discipline, either to destroy the caste of the convicts or to starve them to death. The old tolerant regulations allowed every man to cater and to cook for himself. A money-allowance was granted to him, and he turned it into food after his own fashion. But this system was very injurious to prison discipline. Men loitered over their cooking and their eating and made excuses to escape work. So the prisoners were divided into messes, according to their several castes; rations were issued to them, and cooks were appointed to prepare the daily meals at a stated hour of the day. If the cook were of a lower caste than the eaters, the necessary result was the contamination of the food and loss of caste by the whole mess. The new system, therefore, was one likely to be misunderstood and easily to be misinterpreted. Here, then, was one of those openings which designing men were continually on the alert to detect, and in a fitting hour it was turned to account. Not merely the inmates of the gaols, but the inhabitants of the towns in which prisons were located, were readily made to believe that it was the intention of the British Government to destroy the caste of the prisoners, and forcibly to convert them to Christianity. It mattered not whether Brahman cooks had or had not, in the first instance, been appointed. There might be a Brahman cook to-day; and a low-caste man in his place to-morrow. So the lie had some plausibility about it; and it went abroad that this assault upon the gaol-birds was but the beginning of the end, and that by a variety of different means the religions of the country would soon be destroyed by the Government of the Faringhis.

Reports of this kind commonly appear to be of Hindu origin; for they are calculated primarily to alarm the minds of the people on the score of the destruction of caste. But it seldom happens that they are not followed by some auxiliary lies expressly designed for Muhammadan reception. The Muhammadans had some especial grievances of their own. The tendency of our educational measures, and the all-pervading Englishism with which the country was threatened, was to lower the dignity of Muhammadanism, and to deprive of their

emoluments many influential people of that intolerant faith. The Maulavis were scarcely less alarmed by our innovations than the Pandits. The Arabic of the one fared no better than the Sanskrit of the other. The use of the Persian language in our law courts was abolished; new tests for admission into the Public Service cut down, if they did not wholly destroy, their chances of official employment. There was a general inclination to pare away the privileges and the perquisites of the principal Muhammadan seats of learning. All the religious endowments of the great Calcutta Madrasa were annihilated; and the prevalence of the English language, English learning, and English law, made the Muhammadan doctors shrink into insignificance, whilst the resumption of rent-free tenures, which, in many instances, grievously affected old Musulman families, roused their resentments more than all the rest, and made them ripe for sedition. A more active, a more enterprising, and a more intriguing race than the Hindus, the latter knew well the importance of associating them in any design against the State.* So their animosities were stimulated, and their sympathies were enlisted, by a report, sedulously disseminated, to the effect that the British Government were about to issue an edict prohibiting circumcision, and compelling Muhammadan women to go abroad unveiled.

Small chance would there have been of such a lie as this finding a score of credulous Musulmans to believe it, if it had not been for the little grain of truth that there was in the story of the messing system in the gaols. The innovation had been

* It must be admitted, however, that it is a moot question, in many instances, whether the first movement were made by the Hindus or the Muhammadans. Good authorities sometimes incline to the latter supposition. Take, for example, the following, which has reference to a seditious movement at Patná in the cold season of 1845-46: "From inquiries I have made," wrote Mr. Dampier, Superintendent of Police in the Lower Provinces, "in every quarter, I am of opinion that the Muhammadans of these parts, amongst whom the resumption of the Maafi Tenures, the new educational system, and the encouragement given to the English language, have produced the greatest discontent and the bitterest animosity against our government, finding that the enforcement of the messing system in the gaols had produced a considerable sensation amongst the people, were determined to improve the opportunity, especially as our troops were weak in numbers, and we were supposed to be pressed in the North-West." Of the event to which this refers, more detailed mention will be found in a subsequent chapter of this work, in connection with the attempt then made to corrupt the regiments of Dánápúr.

originated some years before Lord Dalhousie appeared upon the scene. At first it had been introduced with a discretion signifying a full knowledge of the lurking danger;* but, as time advanced, one experiment followed another, and some of the old caution was perhaps relaxed. So in many places the prisoners broke into rebellion and violently resisted the proposed change. Eager and excited, under the influence of a common alarm, the townspeople cheered them on, and were ready to aid them, with all their might, in what they believed to be the defence of their religion. At Shahábád, Sáran, Bihár, and Patná, there were serious disturbances, and at a later period, Banáras, the very nursery and hotbed of Hinduism, the cherished home of the Pandits, was saved only by prudential concessions from becoming the scene of a sanguinary outbreak.

The Hindu and his Lotah.

The experience thus gained of the extreme sensitiveness of the native mind, given up as it was to gross delusions, does not appear to have borne the fruit of increased caution and forbearance. For not long afterwards another improvement in prison discipline again stirred up revolt in gaols; and, for the same reason as before, the people sided with the convicts. A Hindu, or a Hinduised Muhammadan, is nothing without his Lotah. A Lotah is a metal drinking-vessel, which he religiously guards against defilement, and which he holds as a cherished possession when he has nothing else belonging to him in the world. But a brass vessel may be put to other uses than that of holding water. It may brain a magistrate,† or flatten the face of a gaoler, and truly it was a formidable weapon in the hands of a desperate man. So an attempt was made in some places to deprive the prisoners of their lotahs, and to substitute earthenware vessels in their place. Here, then, in the eyes of the people, was another insidious attempt to convert prison discipline into a means of religious persecution—another attempt covertly to reduce them all to one caste. So the prisoners resisted the experiment, and

* See Circular Orders of Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, July, 1841:—"Government are of opinion that these measures ought not to be compulsorily enforced, if there be any good ground to believe that they will violate or offend the religious prejudices of the people, or injure the future prospects of those who may be subjected to temporary imprisonment."

† My earliest recollection of India is associated with the sensation created in Calcutta, in April, 1834, when Mr. Richardson, magistrate of the 24 Parganahs, was killed in Alipur gaol by a blow from a brass lotah.

in more than one place manifested their resentment with a fury which was shared by the population of the towns. At Árah the excitement was so great that the guards were ordered to fire upon the prisoners, and at Muzaffarpúr, in Tirhut, so formidable was the outburst of popular indignation, that the magistrate, in grave official language, described it as "a furious and altogether unexpected outbreak on the part of the people of the town and district in support and sympathy with the prisoners." The rioters, it was said, "included almost all the inhabitants of the town, as well as a vast number of ryots, who declared that they would not go away until the lotahs were restored;" and so great was the danger of the prisoners escaping, of their plundering the Treasury and pillaging the town, before the troops which had been sent for could be brought up, that the civil authorities deemed it expedient to pacify the insurgents by restoring the lotahs to the people in the gaols. And this was not held at the time to be a sudden outburst of rash and misguided ignorance, but the deliberate work of some of the rich native inhabitants of the town, and some of the higher native functionaries of our Civil Courts.

It was clear, indeed, that the inflammability of the native mind was continually increasing; and that there were many influential persons, both Hindu and Muhammadan, running over with bitter resentments against the English, who were eagerly awaiting a favourable opportunity to set all these combustible materials in a blaze. The gaol-business was an experiment, and, as far as it went, a successful one. But it was not by an outbreak of the convict population that the overthrow of the English was to be accomplished. There was another class of men, equally under the control of the Government, whose corruption would far better repay the labours of the Maulavis and the Pandits.

BOOK II.—THE SIPAHI ARMY.

[1756–1856.]

CHAPTER I.

WHILST the hearts of the Aristocracy and of the Priesthood of the country were thus turned against the government of the English, there was a third great class, esteemed to be more powerful than all, whom it was believed that our policy had propitiated. There was security in the thought that the Soldiery were with us. It was the creed of English statesmen that India had been won by the Sword, and must be retained by the Sword. And so long as we held the sword firmly in our hands, there was but little apprehension of any internal danger. The British power in the East was fenced in and fortified by an army of three hundred thousand men.

A small part only of this Army was composed of our own countrymen. Neither the manhood of England nor the revenues of India could supply the means of defending the country only with British troops. A large majority of our fighting-men were, therefore, natives of India, trained, disciplined, and equipped after the English fashion. We had first learnt from the French the readiness with which the "Moors" and the "Gentus" could be made to adapt themselves to the habits and forms of European warfare, and, for a hundred years, we had been improving on the lesson. Little by little, the handful of Blacks which had helped Robert Clive to win the battle of Plassey had swollen into the dimensions of a gigantic army. It had not grown with the growth of the territory which it was intended to defend; but still, nerved and strengthened by such European regiments as the exigencies of the parent state could spare for the service of the outlying

dependency, it was deemed to be of sufficient extent to support the Government which maintained it against all foreign enmity and all intestine revolt.

It was, doubtless, a strange and hazardous experiment upon the forbearance of these disciplined native fighting-men, held only by the bondage of the Salt in allegiance to a trading Company which had usurped the authority of their Princes and reduced their countrymen to subjection. But it was an experiment which, at the date of the commencement of this history, had stood the test of more than a century of probation. The fidelity of the Native Army of India was an established article of our faith. Tried in many severe conjunctures, it had seldom been found wanting. The British Sipáhi had faced death without a fear, and encountered every kind of suffering and privation without a murmur. Commanded by officers whom he trusted and loved, though of another colour and another creed, there was nothing, it was said, which he would not do, there was nothing which he would not endure. In an extremity of hunger, he had spontaneously offered his scanty food to sustain the robuster energies of his English comrade. He had planted the colours of his regiment on a spot which European valour and perseverance had failed to reach. He had subscribed from his slender earnings to the support of our European wars. He had cheerfully consented, when he knew that his Government was in need, to forego that regular receipt of pay which is the very life-blood of foreign service. History for a hundred years had sparkled with examples of his noble fidelity; and there were few who did not believe, in spite of some transitory aberrations, that he would be true to the last line of the chapter.

If there were anything, therefore, to disturb the mind of Lord Dalhousie when he laid down the reins of government on that memorable spring morning, the trouble 1856. which oppressed him was not the growth of any mistrust of the fidelity of the Sipáhi. "Hardly any circumstance of his condition," he said, in his Farewell Minute, "is in need of improvement." And there were few who, reading this passage, the very slenderness of which indicated a more settled faith in the Sipáhi than the most turgid sentences could have expressed, did not feel the same assurance that in that direction there was promise only of continued repose. It was true that Asiatic armies were ever prone to revolt—that we had seen Maráthá

armies and Sikh armies, Arab armies and Gurkha armies, all the military races of India indeed, at some time or other rising in mutiny against their Government, and perhaps overthrowing it. But fifty years had passed away since the minds of our British rulers had been seriously disturbed by a fear of military revolt, and that half century, it was believed, had brought full conviction home to the understanding of the Sipáhi that the Company was a good and generous master, whose colours it was a privilege to bear. Outwardly, there was only a great calm; and it was not thought that beneath that smooth surface there were any latent dangers peculiar to the times. The Sipáhi was esteemed to be "faithful to a proverb"; and his fidelity was the right arm of our strength.

First Sipáhi levies in Bombay and Madras.

Our first Sipáhi levies were raised in the Southern Peninsula, when the English and French powers were contending for the dominant influence in that part of the country. They were few in number, and at the outset commonly held in reserve to support our European fighting-men. But, little by little, they proved that they were worthy to be entrusted with higher duties, and, once trusted, they went boldly to the front. Under native commandants, for the most part Muhammadan or high-caste Rajput Hindus, but disciplined and directed by the English captain, their pride was flattered and their energies stimulated by the victories they gained. How they fought in the attack of Mádura, how they fought in the defence of Arkát, how they crossed bayonets, foot to foot, with the best French troops at Gudalúr, historians have delighted to tell. All the power and all the responsibility, all the honours and rewards, were not then monopolised by the English captains. Large bodies of troops were sometimes despatched, on hazardous enterprises, under the independent command of a native leader, and it was not thought an offence to a European soldier to send him to fight under a black commandant. That black commandant was then a great man, in spite of his colour. He rode on horseback at the head of his men, and a mounted staff-officer, a native adjutant, carried his commands to the Subahdárs of the respective companies. And a brave man or a skilful leader was honoured for his bravery or his skill as much under the folds of a turban as under a round hat.

The Bengal Army.

When the great outrage of the Black Hole called Clive's retributory army to Bengal, the English had no

Sipáhi troops on the banks of the Húglí. But there were fourteen native battalions in Madras, numbering in all ten thousand men, and Clive took two of these with him, across the black water, to Calcutta. Arrived there, and the first blow struck, he began to raise native levies in the neighbourhood, and a battalion of Bengal Sipáhis fought at Plassey side by side with their comrades from Madras. Eight years after this victory, which placed the great province of Bengal at our feet, the one battalion had swollen into nineteen, each of a thousand strong. To each battalion three English officers were appointed —picked men from the English regiments.* The native element was not so strong as in the Southern Army; but a good deal of substantive authority still remained with the black officers.

And that the Bengal Sipáhi was an excellent soldier, was freely declared by men who had seen the best troops of the European powers. Drilled and disciplined in all essential points after the English model, the native soldier was not called upon to divest himself of all the distinctive attributes of his race. Nothing that his creed abhorred or his caste rejected was forced upon him by his Christian masters. He lived apart, cooked apart, ate apart, after the fashion of his tribe. No one grudged him his necklace, his earrings, the caste-marks on his forehead, or the beard which lay upon his breast. He had no fear of being forcibly converted to the religion of the white men, for he could not see that the white men had any religion to which they could convert him. There was no interference from the Adjutant-General's office, no paper government, no perpetual reference to order-books bristling with innovations; and so he was happy and contented, obedient to the officers who commanded him, and faithful to the Government he served.

His predominant sentiment, indeed, was fidelity to his Salt, or, in other words, to the hand that fed him. But if he thought that the hand was unrighteously closed to withhold from him what he believed his due, he showed himself to be most tenacious of his rights, and he resolutely asserted them. This temper very soon manifested itself. The Bengal Army was but seven years old, when it first began to evince some symptoms

* In 1765, the number was increased to five. There were then a native commandant and ten Subahdárs to each battalion.—*Broome.*

of a mutinous spirit. But in this instance the contagion came from the Europeans. The white troops had mutinied because the promise of a donation to the Army from Mir J'afar had halted on the way to performance; and when the money came, the Sipáhis followed their example, because they thought that they were denied their rightful share of the prize. They had just ground of complaint in this instance, and they were soothed by a reasonable concession.* But the fire had not burnt itself out; and before the close of the year some regiments were again in rebellion. One battalion seized and imprisoned its English officers, and vowed that it would serve no more. It was one of those childish ebullitions, of which we have since seen so many in the Bengal Army. But it was plain that the evil was a growing one, and to be arrested with a strong hand. So twenty-four Sipáhis were tried, at Chaprá, by a drum-head Court-Martial, for mutiny and desertion, found guilty, and ordered to be blown away from the guns.

The First Mutiny in Bengal.

A century has passed since the order was carried into execution, and many strange and terrible scenes have been witnessed by the Sipáhi Army; but none stranger or more terrible than this. The troops were drawn up, European and Native, the guns were loaded, and the prisoners led forth to suffer. Major Hector Munro, the chief of the Bengal Army, superintended that dreadful punishment parade, and gave the word of command for the first four of the criminals to be tied up to the guns. The order was being obeyed; the men were being bound; when four tall, stately Grenadiers stepped forward from among the condemned, and represented that as they had always held the post of honour in life, it was due to them that they should take precedence in death. The request was granted; a brief reprieve was given to the men first led to execution; the Grenadiers were tied to the guns, and blown to pieces at the word of command.

Then all through the Sipáhi battalions on that ghastly parade there ran a murmur and a movement, and it seemed that the black troops, who greatly outnumbered the white, were about to strike for the rescue of their comrades. There were

* Whilst a private of the European Army was to receive forty rupees, it was proposed to give a Sipáhi six. The share of the latter was afterwards fixed at twenty rupees.

signs and sounds not to be misunderstood; so the officers of the native regiments went to the front and told Munro that their men were not to be trusted; that the Sipáhis had resolved not to suffer the execution to proceed. On the issue of that reference depended the fate of the Bengal Army. The English troops on that parade were few. There was scarcely a man among them not moved to tears by what he had seen; but Munro knew that they could be trusted, and that they could defend the guns, which once turned upon the natives would have rendered victory certain. So he closed the Europeans on to the battery; the Grenadiers upon one side, the Marines on the other, loaded the pieces with grape, and sent the Sipáhi officers back to their battalions. This done, he gave the word of command to the native regiments to ground arms. In the presence of those loaded guns, and of the two lines of white troops ready to fire upon them, to have disobeyed would have been madness. They moved to the word of command, laid down their arms, and when another word of command was given, which sent the Sipáhis to a distance from their grounded muskets, and the Europeans with the guns took ground on the intervening space, the danger had passed away. The native troops were now completely at Munro's mercy, and the execution went on in their presence to its dreadful close. Twenty men were blown away from the guns at that parade. Four were reserved for execution at another station, as a warning to other regiments, which appeared to be mutinously disposed, and six more, tried and sentenced at Bánkipúr, were blown away at that place. Terrible as was this example, it was the act of a merciful and humane man, and Mercy and Humanity smiled sorrowfully, but approvingly, upon it. It taught the Sipáhi Army that no British soldier, black or white, can rebel against the State without bringing down upon himself fearful retribution, and by the sacrifice of a few guilty forfeited lives checked the progress of a disease which, if weakly suffered to run its course, might have resulted in the slaughter of thousands.

The lesson was not thrown away. The Sipáhi learnt to respect the stern authority of the law, and felt that the Nemesis of this new Government of the British was certain in its operations, and not to be escaped. And the time soon came when his constancy was tested, and found to have the ring of the true metal. The European officers broke into rebellion; but the natives did not falter in their allegiance. Conceiving them-

selves aggrieved by the withdrawal of the extraordinary allowances which they had enjoyed in the field, the former determined to remonstrate against the reduction, and to clamour for what they called their rights. In each brigade meetings were called, consultations were held, and secret committees were formed. under the disguise of Freemasons' Lodges. Headstrong and obstinate, the officers swore to recover the double batta which had been taken from them, or to resign the service in a body. Large sums of money were subscribed, and the Company's civilians contributed to the fund, which was to enable their military brethren to resist the authority of their common masters. It was a formidable conjuncture, and one to try the courage even of a Clive. The orders of the Company were peremptory; and he was not a man to lower the authority of Government by yielding to a threat. But he could not disguise from himself that there were contingencies which might compel him to make a temporary concession to the insubordinates; one was an incursion of the Maráthás,* the other the defection of the Sipáhis. Had the native soldiers sympathised with and supported the English officers, the impetus thus given to the movement would have overborne all power of resistance, and Government must have succumbed to the crisis. In this emergency, Clive saw clearly the importance of securing "the fidelity and attachment of the Subahdárs, or commanding officers of the black troops," and he wrote urgently to his lieutenants, Smith and Fletcher, instructing them to attain this end. But the Sipáhis had never wavered. True to their colours, they were ready at the word of command to fire on the white mutineers. Assured of this, Clive felt that the danger was over—felt that he could hold out against the mutiny of the English officers, even though the European troops should break into revolt.†

Mutiny of the Bengal Officers.

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* "In case the Maráthás should still appear to intend an invasion, or in case you apprehend a mutiny among the troops, but in no other case, you have authority to make terms with the officers of your brigade."—*Lord Clive to Col. Smith. May* 11, 1766. [See also following note.]

† "The black Sipáhi officers, as well as men, have given great proofs of fidelity and steadiness upon this occasion, and so long as they remain so, nothing is to be apprehended from the European soldiery, even if they should be mutinously inclined."—*Clive to Smith, May* 15, 1766, *MS. Records.*—They had just afforded a striking proof that they were prepared, if necessary, to

The founders of the Native Army had conceived the idea of a force recruited from among the people of the country, and commanded for the most part by men of their own race, but of higher social position—men, in a word, of the master-class, accustomed to exact obedience from their inferiors. But it was the inevitable tendency of our increasing power in India to oust the native functionary from his seat, or to lift him from his saddle, that the white man might fix himself there, with all the remarkable tenacity of his race. An Englishman believes that he can do all things better than his neighbours, and, therefore, it was doubtless with the sincere conviction of the good we were doing that we gradually took into our own hands the reins of office, civil and military, and left only the drudgery and the dirty work to be done by the people of the soil. Whether, if we had fairly debated the question, it would have appeared to us a safer and a wiser course to leave real military power in the hands of men who might turn it against us, than to cast upon the country a dangerous class of malcontents identifying the rise of the British power with their own degradation, it may now be difficult to determine. But any other result than that before us would have been utterly at variance with the genius of the English nation, and, theorise as we might, was not to be expected. So it happened, in due course, that the native officers, who had exercised real authority in their battalions, who had enjoyed opportunities of personal distinction, who had felt an honourable pride in their position, were pushed aside by an incursion of English gentlemen, who took all the substantive power into their hands, and left scarcely more than the shadow of rank to the men whom they had supplanted.

Increase of English Officers.

An English subaltern was appointed to every company, and the native officer then began to collapse into something little better than a name.

As the degradation of the native officer was thus accomplished, the whole character of the Sipáhi army was changed. It ceased to be a profession in which men of high position,

fire upon the Europeans. See Broome's "History of the Bengal Army," vol. i. 589: "The European battalion had got under arms, and were preparing to leave the fort and follow their officers, and the artillery were about to do the same, but the unexpected appearance of this firm line of Sipáhis, with their bayonets fixed and arms loaded, threw them into some confusion, of which Captain Smith took advantage, and warned them, that if they did not retire peaceably into their barracks, he would fire upon them at once."

accustomed to command, might satisfy the aspirations and expend the energies of their lives. All distinctions were effaced. The native service of the Company came down to a dead level of common soldiering, and rising from the ranks by a painfully slow progress to merely nominal command. There was employment for the many; there was no longer a career for the few. Thenceforth, therefore, we dug out the materials of our army from the lower strata of society, and the gentry of the land, seeking military service, carried their ambitions beyond the red line of the British frontier, and offered their swords to the Princes of the Native States.

But in those lower strata there were elementary diversities of which in England we know nothing. The lower orders amongst us are simply the lower orders—all standing together on a common level of social equality; we recognise no distinctions among them except in respect of the callings which they follow. Thus one common soldier differs only from another common soldier in the height of his stature, or the breadth of his shoulders, or the steadiness of his drill. But in India the great institution of Caste—at once the most exclusive and the most levelling system in the world—may clothe the filthiest, feeblest mendicant with all the dignities and powers of the proudest lord. So, in our Native Army, a Sipáhi was not merely a Sipáhi. He might be a Brahman, or he might be a Pariah; and though they might stand beside each other shoulder to shoulder, foot to foot, on the parade-ground, there was as wide a gulf between them in the Lines as in our own country yawns between a dustman and a duke.

Caste.

In the Bengal Army the Sipáhis were chiefly of high Caste. Deriving its name from the country in which it was first raised, not from the people composing it, it was recruited in the first instance from among the floating population which the Muhammadan conquest had brought from the northern provinces—from Rohilkhand, from Oudh, from the country between the two rivers; men of migratory habits, and martial instincts, and sturdy frames, differing in all respects, mind and body, from the timid, feeble denizens of Bengal. The Ját, the Rajput, and the priestly Brahman, took service, with the Patán, under the great white chief, who had humbled the pride of Siráju'd daulah. And as time advanced, and the little local militia swelled into the bulk of a magnificent army, the aristocratic element was still dominant in the Bengal Army. But the

native troops of Madras and Bombay were made up from more mixed and less dainty materials. There were men in the ranks of those armies of all nations and of all castes, and the more exclusive soon ceased from their exclusiveness, doing things which their brethren in the Bengal Army shrunk from doing, and solacing their pride with the reflection that it was the "custom of the country." Each system had its advocates. The Bengal Sipáhi, to the outward eye, was the finest soldier; tallest, best-formed, and of the noblest presence. But he was less docile and serviceable than the Sipáhi of the Southern and the Western Armies. In the right mood there was no better soldier in the world, but he was not always in the right mood; and the humours which he displayed were ever a source of trouble to his commanders, and sometimes of danger to the State.

The Sipáhi Officer.

In an army so constituted, the transfer of all substantive authority to a handful of alien officers might have been followed by a fatal collapse of the whole system, but for one fortunate circumstance, which sustained its vitality. The officers appointed to command the Sipáhi battalions were picked men; men chosen from the European regiments, not merely as good soldiers, skilled in their professional duties, but as gentlemen of sound judgment and good temper, acquainted with the languages and the habits of the people of the country, and prone to respect the prejudices of the soldiery. The command of a native battalion was one of the highest objects of ambition. It conferred large powers and often great wealth upon the Sipáhi officer; and though the system was one pregnant with abuses, which we see clearly in these days, it contained that great principle of cohesion which attached the English officer and the native soldier to each other—cohesion, which the refinements of a later civilisation were doomed rapidly to dissolve.

It lasted out the century, but scarcely survived it.* The

* That the national basis, which had originally distinguished the foundation of the Madras Army, did not very long survive the establishment of the reformed system of Bengal, and that the native officers soon lost the power and the dignity in which they had once rejoiced, may be gathered from an early incident in the Life of Sir John Malcolm. It was in 1784, when an exchange of prisoners with Tipú had been negotiated, that a detachment of two companies of Sipáhis was sent out from our side of the Maisur frontier to meet the escort under Major Dallas conveying the English prisoners from Seringapatam. "In command of this party," says the biographer, "went Ensign John Malcolm. This was his first service; and it was long remem-

English Sipáhi officer having become a great substantive fact, not a mere excrescence upon the general body of the English Army, it became necessary to define his position. He had many great advantages, but he had not rank; and the Company's officer found himself continually superseded by younger men in the King's army. Very reasonably, if not always very temperately, he began then to assert his rights; and the result was an entire reorganisation of the Company's army, which greatly improved the status of its old officers and opened a door for the employment of a large numbers of others. By the regulations thus framed, two battalions of Sipáhis were formed into one regiment, to which the same number of officers were posted as to a regiment in the King's army, and all took rank according to the date of their commissions. It was believed that the increased number of European officers would add to the efficiency of the Native Army. But it was admitted, even by those who had been most active in working out the new scheme, that it did not develop all the good results with which it was believed to be laden. The little authority, the little dignity, which still clung to the position of the native officers was then altogether effaced by this new incursion of English gentlemen; * and the discontent, which had been growing up in the minds of the soldiery, began then to bear bitter fruit.

But this was not all. The new regulations, which so greatly improved the position of the Company's officers, and in no respect more than in that of the pensions which they were then permitted to enjoy, held out great inducements to the older officers of the Company's army to retire from active service, and to spend the remainder of their days at home. Many of the old commandants then prepared to leave the battalions over which they had so long exercised paternal authority, and to give up their places to strangers. Not only was there a change of men, but a change also of system. The English officer rose

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bered by others than the youthful hero himself. When the detachment met the prisoners' escort, a bright-faced healthy English boy was seen by the latter riding up to them on a rough pony. Dallas asked him after his commanding officer. 'I am the commanding officer,' said young Malcolm." As Malcolm was born in 1769, he must at this time have been a boy of fifteen; yet he commanded a detachment of two companies of Sipáhis, and all the old native officers attached to them.

* It was alleged to be an advantage of the new system that the increased number of English officers would obviate the necessity of ever sending out a detachment under native command.

by seniority to command. The principle of selection was abandoned. And men, who could scarcely call for a glass of water in the language of the country, or define the difference between a Hindu and a Muhammadan, found themselves invested with responsibilities which ought to have devolved only on men of large local experience and approved good judgment and temper.

But the evil results of the change were not immediately apparent. The last years of the eighteenth, and the first years of the nineteenth century were years of active Indian warfare. In the Maisur and in the Maráthá countries the Sipáhi had constant work, under great generals whom he honoured and trusted; he had strong faith in the destiny of the Company; and his pride was flattered by a succession of brilliant victories. But it is after such wars as those of Harris, Lake, and Wellesley, when a season of stagnation succeeds a protracted period of excitement, that the discipline of an army, whether in the East or in the West, is subjected to its severest trials. All the physical and moral properties which have so long sustained it in high health and perfect efficiency then seem to collapse; and the soldier, nerveless and languid, readily succumbs to the deteriorating influences by which he is surrounded. And so it was with the Sipáhi after those exhausting wars. He was in the state which, of all others, is most susceptible of deleterious impressions. And, unhappily, there was one especial source of annoyance and alarm to irritate and disquiet him in the hour of peace. Amidst the stern realities of active warfare, the European officer abjures the pedantries of the drill-sergeant and the fopperies of the regimental tailor. He has no time for small things; no heart for trifles. It is enough for him that his men are in a condition to fight battles and to win them. But in Peace he sometimes shrivels into an Arbiter of Drill and Dress, and worries in time the best of soldiers into malcontents and mutineers.

The Maisur and Maráthá Wars.

And so it was that, after the fierce excitement of the Maisur and Maráthá wars, there arose among our English officers an ardour for military improvement; and the Sipáhi, who had endured for years, without a murmur, all kinds of hardships and privations, under canvas and on the line of march, felt that life was less endurable in cantonments than it had been in the field, and was continually disturbing himself, in his matted

hut, about the new things that were being forced upon him. All sorts of novelties were bristling up in his path. He was to be drilled after a new English fashion. He was to be dressed after a new English fashion. He was to be shaved after a new English fashion. He was not smart enough for the Martinets who had taken him in hand to polish him up into an English soldier. They were stripping him, indeed, of his distinctive Oriental character; and it was long before he began to see in these efforts to Anglicise him something more than the vexatious innovations and crude experiments of European military reform.

Mutiny of the Coast Army.

To these annoyances and vexations the Madras Army were especially subjected. Composed as were its battalions of men of different castes, and not in any way governed by caste principles, they were held to be peculiarly accessible to innovation; and, little by little, all the old outward characteristics of the native soldier were effaced, and new things, upon the most approved European pattern, substituted in their place. At last the Sipáhi, forbidden to wear the distinguishing marks of Caste on his forehead, stripped of his earrings, to which, by ties alike of vanity and superstition, he was fondly attached,* and ordered to shave himself according to a regulation cut,† was put into a stiff round hat, like a Pariah drummer's, with a flat top, a leather cockade, and a standing feather. It was no longer called a "turband"; it was a hat or cap; in the language of the natives, a *topi;* and a *topi-wallah,* or hat-wearer, was in their phraseology a synonym for a Faringhi or Christian.

The Sipáhi is not logical, but he is credulous and suspicious. It was not difficult to persuade him that there were hidden meanings and occult designs in all this assimilation of the native soldier's dress to that of the European fighting-man. The new hat was not merely an emblem of Christianity, and

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* By the Muhammadan Sipáhi the earring was often worn as a charm. It was given to him at his birth, and dedicated to some patron saint.

† See the following, Para. 10, Sec. 11, Standing Orders of Madras Army: "It is ordered by the Regulations that a native soldier shall not mark his face to denote his caste, or wear earrings when dressed in his uniform; and it is further directed, that at all parades, and on all duties, every soldier of the battalion shall be clean-shaved on the chin. It is directed, also, that uniformity shall, as far as is practicable, be preserved in regard to the quantity and shape of the hair on the upper lip."

therefore possessed of a grave moral significance, but materially, also, it was discovered to be an abomination. It was made in part of leather prepared from the skin of the unclean hog, or of the sacred cow, and was, therefore, an offence and desecration alike to Muhammadan and Hindu. The former had no distinguishing marks of caste to be rubbed off on parade with a dirty stick, but he venerated his beard and his earrings, and, under the force of contact and example, he had developed many strong generic resemblances to the caste-observing Hindu. The Muhammadan of India differs greatly in his habits and his feelings from the Muhammadan of Central Asia or Arabia; he accommodates himself, in some sort, to the usages of the country, and being thus readily acclimatised, he strikes strong root in the soil. Christianity does not differ more than Muhammadanism, doctrinally or ethically, from the religion of the Hindus; but in the one case there may be social fusion, in the other it is impossible. Even in the former instance, the fusion is imperfect, and there is in this partial assimilation of races one of the chief elements of our security in India. But the security derived from this source is also imperfect; and circumstances may at any time, by an unfortunate coincidence, appeal to the ethnical resemblances and the common instincts of different nationalities, in such a manner as to excite in both the same fears and to raise the same aspirations, and so to cause all diversities to be for a time forgotten. And such a coincidence appears now to have arisen. Different races, moved by the sense of a common danger, and roused by a common hope, forgot their differences, and combined against a common foe.

And so it happened that in the spring of 1806, the Hindu and Muhammadan Sipáhi in the Southern Peninsula of India were talking together, like caste-brothers, about their grievances, and weaving plots for their deliverance. It is partly by accident, partly by design, that such plots ripen in the spring. By accident, because relieved from cold-weather exercises, parades, field-days, and inspections, the soldier has more leisure to ruminate his wrongs, and more time to discuss them. By design, because the coming heats and rains paralyse the activities of the white man, and are great gain to the native mutineer. In April and May the English officer sees little of his men; his visits to the Lines are few; few are his appearances on parade. He is languid and prostrate. The morning and evening ride are as much as his energies can compass. The Sipáhi then, disen-

cumbered of dress and dismissed from drill, can afford to snatch some hours from sleep to listen to any strange stories, told by wandering mendicants, with the odour of sanctified filth about them, and to discuss the most incredible fables with all the gravity of settled belief. There is always more or less of this vain talk. It amuses the Sipáhi, and for a while excites him with a visionary prospect of higher rank and better pay, under some new dispensation. But he is commonly content to regard this promised time as a far-off Hegaira, and, as he turns himself round on his charpai for another nap, he philosophically resolves in the meanwhile to eat the Company's salt in peace, and to wait God's pleasure in quietude and patience.

But there was at this time something more to excite the imagination of the Sipáhi in Southern India than the ordinary vain talk of the Bazaars and the Lines. The travelling fakírs were more busy with their inventions; the rumours which they carried from place to place were more ominous; the prophecies which they recited were more significant of speedy fulfilment. There was more point in the grotesque performances of the puppet-shows—more meaning in the rude ballads which were sung and the scraps of verse which were cited. Strange writings were dropped by unseen hands, and strange placards posted on the walls. At all the large military stations in the Karnátik and the Dakhin there was an uneasy feeling as of something coming. There were manifold signs which seemed to indicate that the time to strike had arrived, and so the Sipáhi began to take stock of his grievances and to set before him all the benefits of change.

The complaints of the Sipáhi were many. If he were to pass his whole life in the Company's service, and do what he might, he could not rise higher than the rank of Subahdár; there had been times when distinguished native soldiers had been appointed to high and lucrative commands, and had faithfully done their duty; but those times had passed, and, instead of being exalted, native officers were habitually degraded. A Sipáhi on duty always presented or carried arms to an English officer, but an English soldier suffered a native officer to pass by without a salute. Even an English Sergeant commanded native officers of the highest rank. On parade, the English officers made mistakes, used the wrong words of command, then threw the blame upon the Sipáhis and reviled them. Even native officers, who had grown grey in the service, were publicly

abused by European striplings. On the line of march the native officers were compelled to live in the same tents with the common Sipáhis, and had not, as in the armies of native potentates, elephants or palanquins assigned to them for their conveyance, how great soever the distance which they were obliged to traverse. And if they rode horses or ponies, purchased from their savings, the English officer frowned at them as upstarts. "The Sipáhis of the Nizam and the Maráthá chiefs," they said, "are better off than our Subahdárs and Jamadárs." Then it was urged that the Company's officers took the Sipáhis vast distances from their homes, where they died in strange places, and that their wives and children were left to beg their bread; that native Princes, when they conquered new countries, gave grants of lands to distinguished soldiers, but that the Company only gave them sweet words; that the concubines of the English gentlemen were better paid than the native officers, and their grooms and grass-cutters better than the native soldiers; that the English officers could import into their Zenanas the most beautiful women in the country, whilst the natives hardly dared to look at the slave-girls; and, to crown all, it was declared that General Arthur Wellesley had ordered his wounded Sipáhis to be mercilessly shot to death.

Preposterous as were some of the fables with which this bill of indictment was crusted over, there was doubtless beneath it a large substratum of truth. But the alleged grievances were, for the most part, chronic ailments which the Sipáhi had been long enduring, and might have endured still longer, patiently and silently, had they not culminated in the great outrage of the round hat, with its auxiliary vexations of the shorn beard, the effaced caste-marks, and the despoiled earrings. Then, it was not difficult to teach him that this aggregation of wrongs had become intolerable, and that the time had come for him to strike a blow in defence of his rights. And the teacher was not far distant. The great Muhammadan usurpation of Maisur had been overthrown, but the representatives of the usurper were still in the country. The family of the slain Sultan were living in the fort of Vellúr, as the clients rather than the captives of the English, wit' abundant wealth at their command, and a numerous body of Musulman attendants. But generous as was the treatment they had received, and utterly at variance with their own manner of dealing with fallen enemies, they had not ceased to bewail the loss of the sovereign power which had

passed from their House, or to hate the conquerors who had un-kinged them. In the luxurious idleness of Vellúr they dreamed of the recovery of their lost empire. There was but one way to the attainment of that cherished object, and that way was through the corruption of the Sipáhi. The time was propitious, and the work commenced.

It ought not to have been easy work, but so it was. If there had been relations of confidence between the English officer and the native soldier, the corruption of the latter would have been a task of sore difficulty and danger; but those relations were not what they had been a few years before. It was not that the officers themselves had deteriorated, but that a new system had been introduced, which, greatly improving their state and prospects, and, it may be said, permanently increasing their efficiency as a body, still caused some temporary relaxation of the ties which bound them to the soldiery of the country. The new regulations of 1796, it has been said, opened out to the elder generation of officers a door by which they might retire on advantageous terms from the service. Some took their pensions at once; but a period of active warfare supervened, and many veteran officers waited for the restoration of peace to take advantage of the boon that was offered. They went; and a new race of men, young and inexperienced, took their places. And so, for a time, the Sipáhi did not know his officer, nor the officer his men; they met almost as strangers on parade, and there was little or no communion between them. It was a transition period of most untoward occurrence, when so many other adverse influences were destroying the discipline of the army; and, therefore, again I say the hour was propitious, and the work of corruption commenced.

May 7. Progress of the Mutiny.

At the end of the first week of May, as Adjutant-General Agnew was rising from his work, in the white heat of Fort St. George, there came tidings to his office of general disaffection among the native troops at Vellúr. One battalion, at least, already had broken into open mutiny. The chief of the Madras army, Sir John Cradock, had retired for the evening to his garden house in the pleasant suburbs of Madras, so Agnew drove out to see him with the important missive in his hand. A few days afterwards, Cradock was posting to Vellúr. Arrived there, he found that there had been no exaggeration in the reports which had been furnished to him, but that more judicious treatment at the outset might

have allayed the excitement among the troops, and restored the confidence of the Sipáhi. So said a Court of Inquiry; so said the Commander-in-Chief. A gentle sudorific, almost insensibly expelling the pent-up humours, may suffice at the beginning, though only much blood-letting can cure at the end. But ailments of this kind, in the military body, seldom reveal themselves in their full significance until the time for gentle treatment is past. When Cradock went to Vellúr no mere explanations could repair the mischief that had been done. The mutinous troops were sent down to the Presidency, and others substituted for them. Military discipline was vindicated for the time by a court-martial, and two of the ringleaders were sentenced to be—flogged. But the infection still clung to Vellúr. The whole native garrison was tainted and corrupted.

Nor was it a mere local epidemic. At other military stations in the Karnátik there was similar excitement. Midnight meetings were being held in the Lines; oaths of secresy were being administered to the Sipáhis; threats of the most terrible vengeance were fulminated against any one daring to betray them. The native officers took the lead, the men followed, some roused to feelings of resentment, others huddling together like sheep, under the influence of a vague fear. In the bungalows of the English captains there was but small knowledge of what was passing in the Sipáhis' Lines, and if there had been more, discretion would probably have whispered that in such a case "silence is gold." For when in the high places of Government there is a general disinclination to believe in the existence of danger, it is scarcely safe for men of lowlier station to say or to do anything indicating suspicion and alarm.

At Vellúr, after the first immature demonstration, there was a lull; and the quietude had just the effect that it was intended to have; it disarmed the suspicion and suspended the vigilance of the English. The most obvious precautions were neglected. Even the significant fact that the first open manifestation of disaffection had appeared under the shadow of the asylum of the Maisur Princes, had not suggested any special associations, or indicated the direction in which the watchful eye of the British Government should be turned. Nothing was done to strengthen the European garrison of Vellúr.* No pains were

* "That neither the Government nor the Commander-in-Chief entertained any serious apprehensions from the agitation having first occurred at Vellúr,

taken to cut off the perilous intercourse which existed between the native soldiery and the occupants of the Palace. So the latter went about the Fort jeering the Sipáhis, and telling them that they would soon be made Christians to a man. The different parts of their uniform were curiously examined, amidst shrugs and other expressive gestures, and significant "Wah-wahs!" and vague hints that everything about them in some way portended Christianity. They looked at the Sipáhi's stock, and said, "What is this? It is leather! Well!" Then they would look at his belt, and tell him that it made a cross on his breast, and at the little implements of his calling, the turn-screw and worm, suspended from it, and say that they also were designed to fix the Christian's cross upon his person. But it was the round hat that most of all was the object of the taunts and warnings of the people from the Palace. "It only needed this," they said, "to make you altogether a Faringhi. Take care, or we shall soon all be made Christians—Bazaar-people, Ryots, every one will be compelled to wear the hat; and then the whole country will be ruined." Within the Fort, and outside the Fort, men of all kinds were talking about the forcible conversion to Christianity which threatened them; and everywhere the round hat was spoken of as an instrument by which the Caste of the Hindu was to be destroyed, and the faith of the Musulman desecrated and demolished.

But all this was little known to the officers of the Vellúr garrison, or, if known, was little heeded. So unwilling, indeed, were they to believe that any danger was brewing, that a Sipáhi who told his English officer that the regiments were on the eve of revolt was put in irons as a madman. The native officers declared that he deserved condign punishment for blackening the faces of his corps, and they were readily believed. But the time soon came when the prophecy of evil was verified, and the prophet was exalted and rewarded. Deeply implicated as he was said to be in the plot—a traitor first to the English, and then to his own people—his name became an offence and an abomination to the Army, and the favour shown to him a source

is obvious. The battalion that most opposed the innovation was, indeed, ordered to Madras, but nothing was directed indicative of any jealousy of the Princes. No precautions seem to have been taken within the Fort, and notwithstanding the discontent manifested by the native troops, the garrison was still left with only four companies of Europeans."—*Barry Close to John Malcolm. Poonah, Aug. 12, 1806. MS. Correspondence.*

of the bitterest resentment. "The disposition of the gentlemen of the Company's service," they said, "and the nature of their government, make a thief happy, and an honest man afflicted." *

On the 10th of July the mine suddenly exploded. It was remembered afterwards that on the preceding afternoon an unusual number of people had passed into the Fort, some mounted and some on foot, seemingly on no especial business; all with an insolent, braggart air, laughing and rollicking, making mimic battle among themselves, and otherwise expressing a general expectancy of something coming. It was remembered, too, that on that evening there had been more than the common tendency of the times to speak abusively of the English. The Adjutant of a Sipáhi regiment had been called, to his face, by the vilest term of reproach contained in the language of the country.† But it has been doubted whether the day and hour of the outburst were those fixed for the development of the plot. The conspirators, it is said, were not ripe for action. Two or three days later, the first blow was to have been struck, but that a Jamadar, inflamed with strong drink, could not control the passionate haste within him, and he precipitated the collision which it was the policy of his party to defer.‡ Numbers

Vellúr, July 10, 1806.

* From a paper in Hindustani, transmitted to Adjutant-General Agnew from the Haidarábád Subsidiary Force: "In the affair at Vellúr," said the Sipáhis, "when the mutiny first commenced, it was on account of Mustafa Beg; and the gentlemen of the Company's Government have bestowed upon him a reward of two thousand pagodas from the public treasury, with the rank of Subahdár. The same Mustafá Beg, Sipáhi, was the man who gave the signal for revolt to the people at Vellúr, and this is the man whom the Company have distinguished by their favour."

† Unhappily it is one of the first words which the Englishman in India learns to speak, and by which many young officers, when displeased, habitually call their native servants. (Very few, I think.—G. B. M.)

‡ In the private correspondence of the time, it is stated that the day fixed for the outbreak was the 14th. It appeared, however, in the evidence of the first Committee of Inquiry assembled at Vellúr, that it was agreed that the first blow should be struck fifteen days after the Maisur standard, prepared in the Palace, was ready to be hoisted, and that thirteen days had then passed. The story of the drunken Jamadar appears in Madras Secret Letter, Sept. 30, 1806. It happened, too that the European officer commanding the native guard fell sick, that the Subahdár was also indisposed, and that Jamadar Kásim Khán, one of the most active of the mutineers, was eager to go the grand rounds; and it is possible that this accident helped to precipitate the crisis. On the other hand, it is to be observed that Major Armstrong, who had been absent from Vellúr, and who returned on the night of the 10th, was warned by people outside the Fort not to enter, as something was about to happen.

thus suddenly roused to action were unprepared to play their parts; and letters which had been written to disaffected polygars and others in Maisur had not yet been despatched. It was confidently believed that in a few days ten thousand faithful adherents of the House of Haidar would rally round the standard of the Musulman Princes. All that was required of the Sipáhis was, that they should hold Vellúr for a week. At the end of that time it was believed that the whole country would be in the hands of the insurgents.

His Majesty's 69th.

The European garrison of Vellúr, at this time, consisted only of four companies of a Line regiment. To fall suddenly, in the dead of the night, on all who might happen to be on guard, to overpower them by numbers, and then to murder the rest in their beds, was apparently an easy task. Two hours after midnight the work commenced. The sentries were shot down. The soldiers on main guard were killed as they lay on their cots, and the white men in the hospital were ruthlessly butchered. There was then a scene of unexampled confusion. Roused from their beds by the unaccustomed sound of firing in the Fort, the English officers went out to learn the cause of the commotion, and many of them were shot down by the mutineers in the first bewilderment of surprise. The two senior officers of the garrison were among the first who fell. On the threshold of his house, Fancourt, who commanded the garrison, was warned, for dear life's sake, not to come out, but answering with the Englishman's favourite formula of "Never mind," he made for the Main Guard, and was shot with the "Fall in!" on his lips. Of the survivors two or three made their way to the barracks, and took command of such of the Europeans as had escaped the first murderous onslaught of the Sipáhis. But it was little that the most desperate resolution could do in this extremity to stem the continually increasing tide of furious hostility which threatened to overwhelm them. It was no mere military revolt. The inmates of the Palace were fraternising with the Sipáhis. From the apartments of the Princes went forth food to refresh the weary bodies of the insurgents, and vast promises to stimulate and sustain the energies of their minds. One of the Princes,

Prince Moisu'd dín.

the third son of Tipú, personally encouraged the leaders of the revolt. With his own hands he gave them the significant bhital-nut. With his own lips he proclaimed the rewards to be lavished upon the

restorers of the Muhammadan dynasty. And from his apartments a confidential servant was seen to bring the tiger-striped standard of Maisur, which, amidst vociferous cries of "Dín! Dín!" was hoisted above the walls of the Palace. But the family of the Sultan were soon forgotten. There was no combination to aid their escape. The Sipáhis at first gave themselves up to the work of massacre. The people from the Palace, following in their wake, gorged themselves with the plunder of the white men, and aided the mutineers without sharing their danger. After a time the Sipáhis betook themselves also to plunder; and the common object was forgotten under the excitement of personal greed. The white women in the Fort were spared. The tender mercies of the wicked, with a refined cruelty, preserved them for a worse fate than death. The people from the Palace told the Sipáhis not to kill them, as all the English would be destroyed, and the Moormen might then take them for wives.*

But whilst these terrible scenes were being enacted, and the sons of Tipú were swelling with the proud certainty of seeing the rule of the Sultan again established in Maisur, retribution swift and certain was overtaking the enterprise.

Major Coats.

An officer of the English regiment, who happened to be on duty outside the Fort, heard the firing, thoroughly apprehended the crisis, and, through the darkness of the early morning made his way to Arkát, to carry thither the tidings of insurrection, and to summon succours to the aid of the imperilled garrison. There was a regiment of British Dragoons at Arkát, under the command of Colonel Gillespie. By seven o'clock Coats had told his story. Fifteen minutes afterwards, Gillespie, with a squadron of his regiment, was on his way to Vellúr. The rest were saddling and mounting; the galloper-guns were being horsed and limbered; and a squadron of Native Cavalry was responding to the trumpet-call with as much alacrity as the British Dragoons. The saving virtues of promptitude and preparation were never more conspicuously manifested. A little vacillation, a little blundering, a little delay, the result of nothing being ready when wanted, and all might have been

The 19th Dragoons.

* The massacre included fourteen officers and ninety-nine soldiers killed. There were, moreover, several officers and men wounded, some of the latter mortally.

lost. Never had the sage precept of Haidar Ali, that the English should keep their white soldiers like hunting-leopards in cages, and slip them suddenly and fiercely at the enemy, been wrought into practice with more terrible effect, than now against the followers and supporters of his descendants.

Once under the walls of Vellúr, Gillespie was eager to make his way into the Fort, that he might rally the remnant of the European garrison and secure the safe admission of his men. The outer gates were open, but the last was closed, and in possession of the enemy. There was no hope of forcing it without the aid of the guns. But these were now rapidly approaching. There were good officers with the relieving force, to whom the conduct of external operations might be safely entrusted; and Gillespie longed to find himself with the people whom he had come to save. So, whilst preparations were being made for the attack, he determined to ascend alone the walls of the Fort. In default of ladders, the men of the 69th let down a rope, and, amidst the shouts of the delighted Europeans, he was drawn up, unhurt, to the crest of the ramparts, and took command of the survivors of the unhappy force. Quickly forming at the word of command, they came down eagerly to the charge, and, cheered by the welcome sound of the guns, which were now clamouring for admission, and not to be denied, they kept the mutineers at a distance till the gates were forced; and then the cavalry streamed in, and victory was easy. The retribution was terrible, and just. Hundreds fell beneath the sabres of the Dragoons and of the native horsemen, who emulated the ardour of their European comrades. Hundreds escaped over the walls of the Fort, or threw down their arms and cried for mercy. But the excited troopers, who had seen Tipú's tiger-standard floating over the citadel of Vellúr, could not, after that hot morning-ride, believe that they had done their work until they had destroyed the "cubs." They were eager to be led into the Palace, and there to inflict condign punishment on those whom they believed to be the real instigators of the butchery of their countrymen. For a moment there was a doubt in Gillespie's mind; but an appeal from Colonel Marriott, in whose charge was the Maisur family, removed it; and he put forth a restraining hand. He would not soil his victory with any cruel reprisals. The members of Tipú's family were now at his mercy, and the mercy which he showed them was that which

the Christian soldier delights to rain down upon the fallen and the helpless.*

But the storm had not expended itself in this fierce convulsion. Taught by so stern a lesson, the Government resolved that "all orders which might be liable to the objection of affecting the usages of the troops" should be abandoned. But the obnoxious hats might have been burnt before the eyes of the troops, and the caste-marks and earrings restored on parade, in the presence of the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, and all the magnates of the land; and still a return to quietude and contentment might have been far distant. Individual causes of anger and bitterness might be removed, but still there would remain, together with the mistrust they had engendered, all the vague anxieties on the one side, and the indefinite expectations on the other, which designing men had excited in the minds of the soldiery.† Rebellion had been crushed for a time at its Head-Quarters. The British flag floated again over Vellúr; but there were other strong posts, which it had been intended to

* For all the facts given in the text, I have the authority of a mass of official, semi-official, and private contemporary correspondence, which I have very carefully collated. In doing so, I have been compelled to reject some personal incidents which have hitherto generally formed part of the narrative of the "Massacre of Vellúr," but which, however serviceable they may be for purposes of effective historical writing, are, I am sorry to say, at best apocryphal. It has been said that the officer who carried the tidings to Arkát escaped through a sally-port, and swam the ditch of the Fort so famous for the number and size of its alligators. Sober official correspondence states that Major Coats, who was bearer of the news, was outside the Fort at the time of the outbreak. It is very generally stated, too, that when Gillespie wished to enter the Fort in advance of the men, as there were no ladders and no ropes, the survivors of the 69th fastened their belts together, and thus drew him up the walls. But I have before me two letters, signed "R. Gillespie," which state that he was drawn up by a rope. Among the fictitious incidents of the mutiny may be mentioned the whole of the stories which tell of the foul murder of English women, and the braining of little children before their mothers' eyes.

† "The subversion of the British Empire in India by foreign invasion and domestic revolt, seem to have been the common theme of discourse all over the country, and opinions have generally prevailed that such a revolution was neither an enterprise of great difficulty, nor that the accomplishment of it was far distant. . . . . A most extraordinary and unaccountable impression has been made upon the Sipáhis, which has been fomented by prophecies and predictions inducing a belief that wonderful changes are about to take place, and that the Europeans are to be expelled from India."—*General Hay Macdowall. Naudidrúg, Oct. 31. MS. Correspondence.*

seize, and efforts might yet be made to establish revolt in other parts of the Southern Peninsula.

Nor was it only in Maisur and the Karnátik that the spirit of disaffection was rife. In the Dakhin, also, it was manifesting itself in a manner which, for a while, created serious alarm. At Haidarábád, the capital of the Nizam's dominions, there was a high tide of excitement. It was apprehended that the native troops of the Subsidiary Force, encouraged and aided by some of the chief people of this Muhammadan State, if not by the Nizam himself, would break out into revolt. They were wrought upon by nearly the same influences as had destroyed the loyalty of the troops in Maisur, with some peculiar aggravations of their own. A new commanding officer had recently been placed over them—a smart disciplinarian of the most approved European pattern. They had been worried and alarmed before his arrival. Montresor's appearance soon made matters worse. Knowing little or nothing of the habits and feelings of the country, he enforced the new orders with more than common strictness, and supplemented them with some obnoxious regulations of his own. An order had been issued just before his arrival forbidding the Sipáhi to leave his Guard and to divest himself of his uniform during his period of duty; and now the new English commandant prohibited the beating of tám-táms in the bazaars. It was not seen that these prohibitions were, in effect, orders that the Hindu Sipáhi should take no sustenance on duty, and that there should be no marriage and no funeral processions. When the discovery was made, the new local regulations were rescinded; but it was not possible to rescind the mischief that was done. There was a profound conviction among the Sipáhis that it was the intention of the English to destroy their caste, to break down their religion, and forcibly to convert them to Christianity. And all through the long straggling lines of Haidarábád there was a continual buzz of alarm, and the Sipáhis were asking each other if they had heard how the English General, Wemyss Sáhib, at Colombo, had marched his native soldiers to church.*

Haidarábád.

Colonel Montresor.

* "It is astonishing how strong and how general the impression was of a systematic design to enforce the conversion of the Sipáhis to Christianity. The men here heard, and talked of the late arrival of some clergymen from England, and of the story of General Wemyss marching the Sipáhis to church at Colombo."—*Captain Thomas Sydenham (Resident at Haidarábád) to Mr. Edmonstone, July 27, 1806. MS. Correspondence.*

That the feeling of mingled fear and resentment, which had taken possession of the minds of the soldiery, was much fomented by emissaries from the city of Haidarábád, is not to be doubted. Many leading men, discontented and desperate, at all times prone to intrigue and ripe for rebellion, looked eagerly for a crisis out of which might have come some profit to themselves. It is probable that they were in communication with dependents of the House of Tipú. It is certain that they fostered the resentments and stimulated the ambition of the native officers, and that a programme of action had been agreed upon, of which murder and massacre were the prelude.* But happily the Nizam and his minister, Mír A'lam—the one in word, the other in spirit—were true to the English alliance. Wisely, in that conjuncture, did Sydenham confide all his troubles to them. It is a sad necessity to be compelled to communicate to a native Prince the belief of the English Government that their troops are not to be trusted. But concealment in such a case is impossible, and any attempt to diguise the truth helps others to exaggerate and to distort it. The Nizam knew all that had been going on, perhaps before the British Resident had even a suspicion of it. Eager for his support, and willing to raise the standard of revolt in his name, the conspirators had conveyed to him a written paper signifying their wishes. He did not answer it. He did not give it to the Resident. He simply waited and did nothing. It was not in the nature of the man to do more. He knew the power of the English; but he secretly hated them, and naturally shrank from opposing or betraying a cause which appealed to him in the name of his religion. Perhaps it is hardly fair to expect from a native Prince, under such conflicting circumstances, more than this negative support.

The feeling among the native troops was so strong, the danger appeared to be so imminent, that Montresor was besought by some old Sipáhi officers not to enforce the obnoxious regulations. But he replied that he had been

* Captain Sydenham wrote that, from the best information he could obtain at Haidarábád, it appeared that "the native troops had been invited to desert their colours, to break out in open mutiny, and to murder their officers. It was intended that a commotion should have taken place in the city at the moment of the insurrection in cantonments; that Mir A'lam, and all those in the interests of the English, were to be destroyed; that the Subahdár (Nizam) was to be confined, and Faridún Jah either made Diwan or placed on the masnad, as circumstances might suggest."—*MS. Correspondence.*

selected for that especial command as a fitting agent for their enforcement, and how could he turn his back upon his duty? But when tidings of the massacre at Vellúr reached Haidarábád, he saw at once that concession must be made to the prejudices of the Sipáhi, and the orders were revoked in anticipation of instructions from the Madras Government. Still the troops were not satisfied. Having gained one victory they determined to attempt another. So they fell back upon the old grievance of the leather stock, and the men of some of the battalions, encouraged by their native officers, were seen disencumbering themselves of this article of their uniform on parade, and casting it contemptuously on the ground. A display of vigour at the right time crushed the mutiny ere it was matured. On the 14th of August, the troops at Haidarábád were ordered under arms. The English regiment was posted near the park of artillery, and the cavalry were drawn up *en potence* on both flanks. Then four Subahdárs of Native Infantry, who were believed to be the ringleaders in the mutinous movement, were called to the front and marched off under a guard of thirty Europeans and a company of Sipáhis. Under this escort they were sent to Machlipatan. This movement had the best possible effect both in the cantonment and in the city. Mutiny was awe-struck; sedition was paralysed; conciliatory explanations and addresses, which had before failed, were now crowned with success, and early in the following month Sydenham wrote from Haiderábád that everything was "perfectly tranquil, both in the city and the cantonments." "The Sipáhis," it added, "appear cheerful and contented, and the Government goes on with considerable vigour and regularity."

July 22, 1806.

H.M.'s 33rd Regiment.

But ere long the anxieties of the Government again turned towards the old quarter. It was clear that, in the former domains of the Sultan, the fire, though suppressed for a time, had not been extinguished. At Nandidrúg, in the heart of the Maisur territory, there had been symptoms of uneasiness from the commencement of the year. The native troops were few; but the fortress, built upon a high scarped rock, was one of uncommon strength, and, well defended, might have defied attack. In itself, therefore, a coveted possession for the rebel force, it was rendered doubly important by its position. For it was within a night's march of the great station of Bangalúr, and the mutineers from that post would have flocked

Nandidrúg.

to it as a rallying-point and a stronghold, admirably suited for the Head-Quarters of Rebellion.* The influences, therefore, of which I have spoken—the fakirs, the conjurors, the puppet-showmen, the propagators of strange prophecies—were more than commonly operative in that direction, and had success attended the first outbreak at Vellúr, the Nandidrúg garrison would then have turned upon their officers, hoisted the rebel flag on the walls of the Fort, and displayed signals which might have been seen at Bangalúr. But a season of suspended activity naturally followed this failure; and it was not until the month of October that they ventured to resolve on any open demonstration. Then the Muhammadan and Hindu Sipáhis feasted together, bound themselves by solemn engagements to act as brethren in a common cause, and swore that they would rise against and massacre their English officers.

The day and the hour of the butchery were fixed. The native soldiery had quietly sent their families out of the Fort, and otherwise prepared for the struggle.† Two hours before midnight on the 18th of October the Sipáhis were to have rushed upon their English officers, and not left a white man living in the place. But about eight o'clock on that evening an English officer galloped up to the house of the Commandant Cuppage, and told him that no time was to be lost; that the Sipáhis were on the point of rising, and that means of safety must at once be sought. Scarce had the story been told, when an old and distinguished native officer came breathless with the same intelligence. There was no room for doubt; no time for delay. An express, calling for reinforcements, was despatched to Bangalúr; and the officers, selecting one of their houses in the Pagoda-square, which seemed best adapted to purposes of defence, took post together and waited the issue. The night

October 18, 1806.

Capt. Baynes.

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* Mark Wilks wrote to Barry Close, with reference to this movement at Nandidrúg: "I do not know what to make of all this; men who had any great combination in view could scarcely have any design to act on so small a scale." But Barry Close, taking a more comprehensive view, replied: "The great object of the Insurgents at Vellúre seems to have been to secure to themselves a strong pos. on which to assemble in force. Cuppage's garrison, though small, may have had it in view to seize on Nandidrúg. Possessed of this strong post, the conspirators would have probably assembled upon it in force, and proceeded to act against us openly."—*MS. Correspondence.*

† Colonel Cuppage to Barry Close.—*MS. Correspondence.*

passed without an attack; and on the morrow afternoon safety came in the shape of a squadron of Dragoons from Bangalúr. Colonel Davis had received the tidings soon after daybreak, and by three o'clock his troopers were clattering into Nandidrúg.

November came, and with it came new troubles. Far down the coast, not many leagues removed from the southernmost part of the Peninsula, lies the station of Páliamkottá. There Major Welsh, with six European officers under him, commanded a Sipáhi battalion, in which many relatives of the mutineers cut up at Vellúr were brooding over their loss of kindred. Towards the end of the third week of the month, it was believed that the Muhammadan Sipáhis were about to rise and massacre all the Europeans in the place. The story ran that, rejecting with contempt the idea of banding themselves with the Hindus, they had met at a mosque and concerted their murderous plans. Some buildings were to be fired in the cantoment to draw the English officers from their homes. In the confusion, the whole were to be slain, the Fort was to be seized, and the rebel flag hoisted on the ramparts. Scenting the plot, a Malabar-man went to the mosque in disguise, and carried tidings of it to the English Commandant. The danger appeared to be imminent, and Welsh at once took his measures to avert it. Whatever may have been the judgment and discretion of the man, his courage and determination were conspicuous; and his comrades were of the same temper. Assuming the bold, intrepid front, which has so often been known to overawe multitudes, this little handful of undaunted Englishmen seized and confined thirteen native officers, and turned five hundred Musulman Sipáhis out of the Fort. That they were able to accomplish this, even with the support of the Hindus, was declared to be a proof that no desperate measures had really been designed. But the premature explosion of a plot of this kind always creates a panic. In a state of fear and surprise, men are not capable of reasoning. There is a vague impression that boldness presages power; that there is something behind the imposing front. A single man has ere now routed a whole garrison. I am not sure, therefore, that there was no danger, because it was so easily trodden out.

Páliamkottá.

Two days afterwards Colonel Dyce, who commanded the district of Tinnivéli, threw himself into Páliamkottá; assembled

the Hindu troops; told them that he had come there to maintain the authority of the Company, or to die in the defence of the colours which he had sworn to protect. He then called upon those who were of the same mind to approach the British flag for the same purpose, but if not to depart in peace. They went up and took the oath to a man, presented arms to the colours, gave three unbidden cheers in earnest of their unshaken loyalty, and fell in as on a muster-parade.

On the first appearance of danger, Welsh had despatched a letter by a country-boat to Ceylon, calling for European troops, and the call was responded to with an alacrity beyond all praise. But so effectual were the measures which had been already adopted, or so little of real danger had there been, that when the succour which had been sent for arrived from Trichinápalí, the alarm had passed, and the work was done.

Told as I have told this story—a simple recital of facts, as written down in contemporary correspondence—it would appear to afford an instructive example of promptitude and vigour. But this is not the only lesson to be learnt from it. It is more instructive still to note that Major Welsh was severely condemned as an alarmist, the tendency of whose precipitate action was to destroy confidence and to create irritation. Another officer,* who, apprehending danger, had disarmed his regiment as a precaution, was denounced with still greater vehemence.† Apprehensions of this kind were described as "disgraceful and groundless panics"; and political officers chuckled to think that it was proposed at Madras to remove from their commands and to bring to Courts-Martial the officers who had considered it their duty not to wait to be attacked.‡ With these lessons

* Lieutenant-Colonel Grant.

† I find this fact recorded in the correspondence of the day with three notes of exclamation: "With regard to Colonel Grant," wrote Major Wilks from Maisur, "it appears that he disarmed his troops simply as a measure of precaution!!! Whether we are in danger from our own misconduct, or from worse causes, the danger is great. . . . I conclude that Chalmers will be sent to supersede Grant, and Vesey to Páliamkottá, and my best hope is that there will be found sufficient grounds for turning Welsh and Grant out of the service, but this will not restore the confidence of the Sipáhis."—*MS. Correspondence.* Grant's conduct was at once repudiated in a general order, and he and Welsh ordered for Court-Martial. Both were honourably acquitted.

‡ Many years after the occurrence of these events, Major, then Colonel Welsh, published two volumes of Military Reminiscences. Turning to these

before us, we cannot wonder that men, in such conjunctures, should hesitate to strike the blow which any one may declare uncalled-for, and the wisdom of which no one can prove—should pause to consider whether they are more likely to develop the evil by an assertion of strength, or to encourage its growth by the feebleness of inaction.*

Walajahábád.

But it was plain that, whatsoever might be the wisest course in such a conjuncture, the Government of Lord William Bentinck was all in favour of the milder and more sedative mode of treatment. In remarkable contrast to the manner in which the symptoms of coming mutiny were grappled with at Páliamkottá stands the story of Walajahábád. Some of the earliest signs of disaffection, on the score of the turban, had manifested themselves at that place; and Gillespie, with his dragoons, had been despatched thither at the end of July, not without a murmur of discontent at the thought of his "poor hard-worked fellows" being sent to counteract what appeared to him a doubtful danger. It was believed, however, that the uneasiness had passed away, and for some months there had been apparent tranquillity. But in November the alarm began to revive; and a detailed statement of various indications of a coming outbreak, drawn up by Major Hazlewood, was sent to the authorities. On the morning of the 2nd of December the members of the Madras Government met in

for some account of the affair at Páliamkottá, I was disappointed to find only the following scanty notice of it: "Towards the end of the year an event took place, which, although injurious to my own prospects and fortune, under the signal blessing of Providence terminated fortunately. Time has now spread his oblivious wings over the whole occurrence, and I will not attempt to remove the veil."

* The difficulties of the English officer at that time were thus described by a contemporary writer, in a passage which I have chanced upon since the above was written: "The massacre at Vellúr had naturally created a great degree of mistrust between the European officers and the Sipáhis throughout the Army; and the indecision of measures at Head-Quarters seemed further to strengthen this mistrust. If an officer took *no* precautionary measures on receiving information of an intended plot, he was liable to the severest censure, as well as responsible for his own and the lives of his European officers. On the contrary, if he took precautionary measures he was accused of creating unnecessary distrust; and equally censured for being premature and not allowing the mutiny to *go on* till satisfactorily proved, when it would have been too late to prevent."—*Strictures on the present Government of India, &c. In a Letter from an Officer resident on the spot. Trichinápalí*, 1807; *London*, 1808.

Council. Hazlewood's statement was laid before them and gravely discussed; but with no definite result. The Council broke up without a decision, but only to meet again, refreshed by the sea-breeze and the evening ride. Then it was resolved that a discreet officer, in the confidence of Government, should be sent to Walajahábád to inquire into and report on the state of affairs; and on the same evening Colonel Munro, the Quartermaster-General, received his instructions, and prepared to depart. The event appeared to justify this cautious line of action; but one shudders to think what might have happened at Walajahábád whilst Government were deliberating over written statements of danger, and drafting instructions for a Staff Officer in the Council-Chamber of Madras.

Dec., 1806.

Six months had now passed since the Madras Government had been made acquainted with the state of feeling in the Native Army, and understood that a vague apprehension of the destruction of caste and of "forcible conversion to Christianity" had been one of the chief causes of the prevailing disquietude. The obnoxious regulations had been abandoned, but this was a concession obviously extorted from fear; and nothing had yet been done to reassure the minds of the soldiery by a kindly paternal address to them from the fountain-head of the local Government. But at last Bentinck and his colleagues awoke to a sense of the plain and palpable duty which lay before them; and at this Council of the 2nd of December a Proclamation was agreed upon, and on the following day issued, which, translated into the Hindustani, the Támil, and Telugú dialects, was sent to every native battalion in the Army, with orders to commanding officers to make its contents known to every native officer and Sipáhi under their command. After adverting to the extraordinary agitation that had for some time prevailed in the Coast Army, and the reports spread for malicious purposes, by persons of evil intention, that it was the design of the British Government to convert the troops by forcible means to Christianity, the Proclamation proceeded to declare that the constant kindness and liberality at all times shown to the Sipáhi should convince him of the happiness of his situation, "greater than what the troops of any other part of the world enjoy," and induce him to return to the good conduct for which he had been distinguished in the days of Lawrence and Coote, and "other renowned heroes." If they would not, they would learn that the British

Government "is not less prepared to punish the guilty than to protect and distinguish those who are deserving of its favour." But this was something more than the truth. The British Government did not show itself, in this conjuncture, to be "prepared to punish the guilty" in a manner proportionate to the measure of their offences. Lord William Bentinck and his Councillors were all for clemency. Sir John Cradock counselled the adoption of more vigorous punitory measures, and the Supreme Government were disposed to support the military chief. Something of a compromise then ensued, the result of which was a very moderate instalment of the retribution which was justly due. A few only of the most guilty of the murderers were executed; whilst others, clearly convicted of taking part in the sanguinary revolt, were merely dismissed the service. And if it had not been for the overruling authority of the Government at Calcutta—that is, of Sir George Barlow, with Mr. Edmonstone at his elbow*—the numbers of the assassin-battalions would not have been erased from the Army List. But penal measures did not end here. The higher tribunals of the Home Government condemned the chief authorities of Madras, and, justly or unjustly, the Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Adjutant-General were summarily removed from office.

1807. Alleged causes of the Revolt.

The mutiny died out with the old year; the active danger was passed; but it left behind it a flood of bitter controversy which did not readily subside. What was the cause of the revolt? Whose fault was it? Was it a mere military mutiny, the growth of internal irritation, or was it a political movement fomented by agitators from without? The controversialists on both sides were partly wrong and partly right—wrong in their denials, right in their assertions. It is difficult in such a case to put together in proper sequence all the links of a great chain of

* Many years afterwards, Sir George Barlow gracefully acknowledged the valuable assistance which, in this conjuncture, Mr. Edmonstone had rendered to him, saying that his "unshaken firmness and resolution in times of internal difficulty and danger" were "signally displayed on the discovery of the conspiracy formed at Vellúr." "His wise and steady counsel," added Barlow, "afforded me important aid and support in carrying into effect the measures necessary for counteracting the impressions made by that alarming event, which threatened the most serious consequences to the security of our power."—*MS. Documents.*

events terminating even in an incident of yesterday, so little do we know of what is stirring in the occult heart of native society. After a lapse of half a century it is impossible. There is often in the Simultaneous, the Coincidental, an apparent uniformity of tendency, which simulates design, but which, so far as human agency is concerned, is wholly fortuitous. We see this in the commonest concerns of life. We see it in events affecting mightily the destinies of empires. Under a pressure of concurrent annoyances and vexations, men often cry out that there is a conspiracy against them, and the historical inquirer often sees a conspiracy when in reality there is only a coincidence. A great disaster, like the massacre at Vellúr, acts like iodine upon hidden writings in rice-water. Suddenly is proclaimed to us in all its significance what has long been written down on the page of the Past, but which, for want of the revealing agent, has hitherto lain illegibly before us. Doubtless, many hidden things were disclosed to us at this time; but whether they were peculiar to the crisis or of a normal character, at any period discernible had we taken proper steps to develop them, was matter of grave dispute. The political officers, headed by Mark Wilks, the historian of Southern India, who was then representing British interests in Maisur, laughed to scorn the discoveries of the military officers, and said that the things which they spoke of as so portentous were in reality only phenomena of every-day appearance, familiar to men acquainted with the feelings and habits of the people. He derided all that had been said about seditious conversations in the Bazaars and the Lines, the wild prophecies and mysterious hints of wandering Fakírs, and the suggestive devices of the puppet-shows.* There was nothing in all this, he contended, of an exceptional character, to be regarded as the harbingers of mutiny and massacre. And his arguments culminated in the chuckling assertion that the military authorities had discovered a cabalistic document of a most treasonable character, which appeared to their excited imaginations to be a plan for partitioning the territory to be wrested from the English, but which, in reality, was nothing

* There were two subjects which the *Kútpútli-Wálas* extremely delighted to illustrate—the degradation of the Mughul, and the victories of the French over the English, the one intended to excite hatred, the other contempt, in the minds of the spectators.

more portentous than the scribblement of the Dervésh Bázi, or "royal game of goose."

With equal confidence on the other hand, the military authorities protested that the new regulations had nothing to do with the mutiny—that it was altogether a political movement. The new cap, they said, had been accepted and worn by the Sipáhis. Three representative men, types of the principal nationalities composing the Coast Army, had signified their satisfaction with the new head-dress, and one or two regiments *en masse* had been paraded in it without a murmur. The fact, they alleged, was that the movement had emanated solely from the deposed family of Tipú Sultan; that its object was to restore, in the first instance, the Muhammadan dynasty in Southern India, and eventually to recover the imperial throne for the Mughul. If proper precautions had been taken by Government—if Tipú's family, eager for a taste of blood, had not been left to disport themselves at will in Vellúr—if they had not been gorged with money, and attended by countless Musulman followers eager to recover the posts and the privileges which they had lost, there would, said the military leaders, have been no massacre and no mutiny and, some said, not even a murmur of discontent. But the military critic was as wrong as the political, and for the same reason. Each was blinded by professional interests and professional prejudices. Each argued in self-defence. The truth, as it commonly does in such cases, lay midway between the two extremes. But for the intrigues of Tipú's family there would have been no outbreak at that time, and but for the new military regulations they might have intrigued in vain. It so happened that the political and military influences were adverse to us at the same moment, and that from the conjuncture arose the event known in history as the Massacre of Vellúr, but which was in reality a much more extensive military combination, prevented only by repeated local failures from swelling into the dimensions of a general revolt of the Coast Army.

Nor is it to be forgotten that there was a third party, which attributed the calamity less to political and to military causes than to the general uneasiness which had taken possession of the native mind in consequence of the supposed activity of Christian missionaries and of certain "missionary chaplains." The dread of a general destruction of Caste and forcible conversion to Christianity was not confined to the Sipáhis. The

most preposterous stories were current in the Bazaars. Among other wild fables, which took firm hold of the popular mind, was one to the effect that the Company's officers had collected all the newly-manufactured salt, had divided it into two great heaps, and over one had sprinkled the blood of hogs, and over the other the blood of cows; that they had then sent it to be sold throughout the country for the pollution and the desecration of Muhammadans and Hindus, that all might be brought to one caste and to one religion like the English. When this absurd story was circulated, some ceased altogether to eat salt, and some purchased, at high prices, and carefully stored away, supplies of the necessary article, guaranteed to have been in the Bazaars before the atrocious act of the Faringhis had been committed. Another story was that the Collector of Trinkomalí had, under the orders of Government, laid the foundation of a Christian Church in his district close to the great Pagoda of the Hindus; that he had collected all the stone-cutters and builders in the neighbourhood; that he was taxing every household for the payment of the cost of the building; that he had forbidden all ingress to the Pagoda, and all worshipping of idols; and that to all complaints on the subject he had replied that there was nothing extraordinary in what he was doing, as Government had ordered a similar building to be erected in every town and every village in the country. In India, stories of this kind are readily believed. The grosser the lie, the more eagerly it is devoured.* They are circulated by designing persons with a certainty that they will not be lost. That the excitement of religious alarm was the principal means by which the enemies of the British Government hoped to accomplish

* Not immediately illustrating this point of inquiry, but even more preposterous in itself than the rumours cited in the text, was a story which was circulated at Haidarábád. It was stated that an oracle in the neighbouring Pagoda had declared that there was considerable treasure at the bottom of a well in the European barracks, which was destined not to be discovered until a certain number of human heads had been offered up to the tutelar deity of the place; and that accordingly the European soldiers were sacrificing the necessary number of victims with all possible dispatch. It happened that the dead body of a native without a head was found near the Residency, and that a drunken European artilleryman, about the same time, attacked a native sentry at his post. These facts gave new wings to the report, and such was the alarm that the natives would not leave their homes or work after dark, and it was reported both to the Nizam and his minister that a hundred bodies without heads were lying on the banks of the Massí River.—*Captain Sydenham to the Government of India. MS. Records.*

their objects is certain; but, if there had not been a foregone determination to excite this alarm, nothing in the actual progress of Christianity at that time would have done it. A comparison, indeed, between the religious status of the English in India and the wild stories of forcible conversion which were then circulated, seemed openly to give the lie to the malignant inventions of the enemy. There were no indications on the part of Government of any especial concern for the interests of Christianity, and among the officers of the Army there were so few external signs of religion, that the Sipáhis scarcely knew whether they owned any faith at all.* But in a state of panic men do not pause to reason; and, if at any time the doubt had been suggested, it would have been astutely answered that the English gentlemen cared only to destroy the religions of the country, and to make the people all of one or of no caste, in order that they might make their soldiers and servants do everything they wished.

Views of the Home Government.

The authoritative judgment of a Special Commission appointed to investigate the causes of the outbreak confirmed the views of the more moderate section of the community, which recognised, not one, but many disturbing agencies; and the Home Government accepted the interpretation in a candid and impartial spirit. That "the late innovations as to the dress and appearance of the Sipáhis were the leading cause of the mutiny, and the other was the residence of the family of the late Tipú Sultan at Vellúr," was, doubtless, true as far as it went. But the merchant-rulers of Leadenhall-street were disposed to sound the lower depths of the difficulty. Those were not days when the numerous urgent claims of the Present imperatively forbade the elaborate investigation of the Past. So the Directors began seriously to consider what had been the more remote predisposing causes of the almost general disaffection of the Coast Army. And the "Chairs," in a masterly letter to Mr. Dundas, freighted with the solid intelligence of Charles Grant, declared their conviction that the general decline of the fidelity

* Sir John Cradock said, after the occurrence of these events, that "from the total absence of religious establishments in the interior of the country, from the habits of life prevalent among military men, it is a melancholy truth, that so unfrequent are the religious observances of officers doing duty with battalions, that the Sipáhis have not, until very lately, discovered the nature of the religion professed by the English."

of the Army and of the attachment of the People to British rule, was to be traced to the fact that a new class of men, with little knowledge of India, little interest in its inhabitants, and little toleration for their prejudices, had begun to monopolise the chief seats in the Government and the chief posts in the Army; that the annexations of Lord Wellesley had beggared the old Muhammadan families, and had shaken the belief of the people in British moderation and good faith; and that the whole tendency of the existing system was to promote the intrusion of a rampant Englishism, and thus to widen the gulf between the Rulers and the Ruled.*

* The Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the East India Company (Mr. Parry and Mr. Grant) to the President of the Board of Control (Mr. Dundas).—*May* 18, 1807. *MS. Records.*

CHAPTER II.

It was not strange that, for some time after the occurrence of these events in the Coast Army, the English in Southern India should have been possessed by a common sense of anger, and that this feeling should have spread to some other parts of the country. For a while the white man saw a conspirator beneath the folds of every turban, and a conspiracy in every group of people talking by the wayside. In every laugh there was an insult, and in every shrug there was a menace. English officers pillowed their heads on loaded fire-arms, and fondled the hilts of their swords as they slept. But gradually they lived down the sensitiveness that so distressed them. Other thoughts and feelings took possession of the bungalow; other subjects were dominant in the mess-room. And ere long a new grievance came to supersede an old danger; and the officers of the Madras Army forgot the rebellion of the Sipáhis as they incubated a rebellion of their own. How the mutiny of the officers grew out of the mutiny of the men of the Coast Army, it would not be difficult to show; but the chapter of Indian history which includes the former need not be re-written here. The objects for which the officers contended were altogether remote from the interests and sympathies of the Sipáhis; and although the latter, in ignorance, might at first have followed their commanders, it is not probable that they would have continued to cast in their lot with the mutineers, after the true character of the movement had been explained to them, and an appeal made to their fidelity by the State. But they were not unobservant spectators of that unseemly strife; and the impression made upon the Sipáhi's mind by this spectacle of disunion must have been of a most injurious kind. There is nothing so essential to the permanence of that Opinion, on which we so much rely, as a prevailing sense that the English in India are not Many but One.

Mutiny of Madras Officers, 1809.

Nor was it strange that, after these unfortunate events, the fame of which went abroad throughout the whole country, there should have been for a little space less eagerness than before to enlist into the service of the Company. But the reluctance passed away under the soothing influence of time. In the prompt and regular issue of pay, and in the pensions, which had all the security of funded property, there were attractions, unknown to Asiatic armies, not easily to be resisted. And there were other privileges, equally dear to the people of the country, which lured them by thousands into the ranks of the Company's Army. As soon as his name was on the muster-roll, the Sipáhi, and through him all the members of his family, passed under the special protection of the State.

The English Soldier.

It is difficult to conceive two conditions of life more dissimilar in their social aspects than soldiering in India and soldiering in England. In England few men enlist into the Army as an honourable profession, or seek it as an advantageous source of subsistence. Few men enter it with any high hopes or any pleasurable emotions. The recruit has commonly broken down as a civilian. Of ruined fortune and bankrupt reputation, he is tempted, cheated, snared into the Army. Lying placards on the walls, lying words in the pot-house, the gaudy ribbons of Sergeant Kite, the drum and the fife and the strong drink, captivate and enthral him when he is not master of himself. He has quarrelled with his sweetheart or robbed his employer. He has exhausted the patience of his own people, and the outer world has turned its back upon him. And so he goes for a soldier. As soon as he has taken the shilling, he has gone right out of the family circle and out of the circle of civil life. He is a thousandth part of a regiment of the Line. Perhaps he has changed his name and stripped himself of his personal identity. Anyhow, he is as one dead. Little more is heard of him; and unless it be some doting old mother, who best loves the blackest sheep of the flock, nobody much wishes to hear. It is often, indeed, no greater source of pride to an English family to know that one of its members is serving the Queen, in the ranks of her Army, than to know that one is provided for, as a convict, at the national expense.

The Indian Soldier.

But the native soldier of India was altogether of a different kind. When he became a soldier, he did not cease to be a civilian. He severed no family

ties; he abandoned no civil rights. He was not the outcast, but the stay and pride of his house. He visited his home at stated times. He remitted to it a large part of his pay. It was a decorous boast in many families that generation after generation had eaten the Company's salt. Often, indeed, in one household you might see the Past, the Present, and the Future of this coveted military service. There was the ancient pensioner under the shade of the banyan-tree in his native village, who had stories to tell of Lawrence, Coote, and Medows; of battles fought with the French; of the long war with Haidar and the later struggles with his son. There was the Sipáhi, on furlough from active service, in the prime of his life, who had his stories also to tell of "the great Lord's brother," the younger Wellesley, of Harris and Baird, perhaps of "Bikrum Sáhib" and Egypt, and how "Lick Sáhib," the fine old man, when provisions were scarce in the camp, had ridden through the lines, eating dried pulse for his dinner. And there was the bright-eyed, supple-limbed, quick-witted boy, who looked forward with eager expectancy to the time when he would be permitted to take his father's place, and serve under some noted leader. It was no fond delusion, no trick of our self-love, to believe in such pictures as this. The Company's Sipáhis had a genuine pride in their colours, and the classes from which they were drawn rejoiced in their connection with the paramount State. It was honourable service, sought by the very flower of the people, and to be dismissed from it was a heavy punishment and a sore disgrace.

Abercrombie and Lake.

Strong as were these ties, the people were bound to the military service of the Company by the still stronger ties of self-interest. For not only were the Sipáhis, as has been said, well cared for as soldiers—well paid and well pensioned—but, as civilians, they had large privileges which others did not enjoy. Many of them, belonging to the lesser yeomanry of the country, were possessors of, or shareholders in, small landed estates; and, thus endowed, they rejoiced greatly in a regulation which gave the Sipáhi on furlough a right to be heard before other suitors in our civil courts.*

Civil privileges of the Sipáhi.

* This was a part only of the civil privileges enjoyed by the native soldier. Sir Jasper Nicolls, in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1832, said that the withdrawal of these privileges had been regarded as an especial grievance by the Sipáhis—but I have failed to discover that they

In a country whose people are inordinately given to litigation, and where justice is commonly slow-paced, this was so prodigious a boon, that entrance to the service was often sought for the express purpose of securing this valuable precedence, and the soldier-member of the family thus became the representative of his whole house. In this connection of the soldiery with hereditary rights in the soil, there was an additional guarantee for his loyalty and good conduct. He was not merely a soldier—a component unit of number two company, third file from the right; he was an important member of society, a distinct individuality in his native village no less than in his cantonment Lines. He retained his self-respect and the respect of others; and had a personal interest in the stability of the Government under which his rights were secured.

And whilst these extraneous advantages were attached to his position as a soldier of the Company, there was nothing inherent in the service itself to render it distasteful to him.

The Sipáhi and his Officer.

His officers were aliens of another colour and another creed; but the Hindu was accustomed to foreign supremacy, and the Muhammadan, profoundly impressed with the mutabilities of fortune, bowed himself to the stern necessities of fate. As long as the Sipáhi respected the personal qualities of the English officer, and the English officer felt a personal attachment for the Sipáhi, the relations between them were in no degree marred by any considerations of difference of race. There was a strong sense of comradeship between them, which atoned for the absence of other ties. The accidental severance of which I have spoken was but short-lived.* In that first quarter of the present century, which saw so much hard fighting in the field, the heart of the Sipáhi officer again turned

ever were withdrawn. [*Note by Editor.*—They were withdrawn from the regulation provinces, but not from Oudh, the home of the great majority of the Sipáhis, until after the annexation of that country by the British. It was this very withdrawal that tended greatly to incense the Sipáhis against their masters.—G. B. M.]

* There had certainly been, before the mutiny in Southern India, a very culpable want of kindly consideration on the part of our English officers for the native officers and men of the Sipáhi army. In the letter, written by the Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the East India Company, to Mr. Dundas, referred to above, this is alleged to have been one of the remote causes of the mutiny. It is stated that the English had ceased to offer chairs to their native officers when visited by them. A favourable reaction, however, seems afterwards to have set in.

towards his men, and the men looked up and clung to him with a childlike confidence and affection. To command a company, and in due course, a regiment of Sipáhis, was still held to be a worthy object of professional ambition. The regiment, in those days, was the officer's home, whether in camp, or cantonment, or on the line of march. There was but little looking beyond; little hankering to leave it. To interest himself in the daily concerns of the Sipáhis, to converse with them off parade, to enter into their feelings, to contribute to their comforts, were duties, the performance of which occupied his time, amused his mind, and yielded as much happiness to himself as it imparted to others. There was, in truth, little to divert him from the business of his profession or to raise up a barrier between him and his men. Intercourse with Europe was rare and difficult. Neither the charms of English literature nor the attractions of English womanhood alienated his affections from the routine of military life, and made its details dull and dreary in his sight. He had subdued his habits, and very much his way of thinking, to the Orientalism by which he was surrounded. He was glad to welcome the native officer to his bungalow, to learn from him the news of the Lines and the gossip of the Bazaar, and to tell him, in turn, what were the chances of another campaign and to what new station the regiment was likely to be moved at the approaching annual Relief. If there were any complaints in the regiments, the grievance was stated with freedom on the one side, and listened to with interest on the other. If the men were right, there was a remedy; if they were wrong, there was an explanation. The Sipáhi looked to his officer as to one who had both the power and the will to dispense ample justice to him. In every battalion, indeed, the men turned to their commandant as the depository of all their griefs, and the redresser of all their wrongs They called him their father, and he rejoiced to describe them as his "bábá lóg"—his babes.

Progress of Centralisation.

But in time the power was taken from him, and with the power went also the will. A variety of deteriorating circumstances occurred—some the inevitable growth of British progress in the East, and some the results of ignorance, thoughtlessness, or miscalculation on the part of the governing body. The power of the English officer was curtailed and his influence declined. The command of a regiment had once been something more than a name. The commanding officer could promote his men, could punish

his men, could dress them and discipline them as he pleased. The different battalions were called after the commander who had first led them to victory, and they rejoiced to be so distinguished. But, little by little, this power, by the absorbing action of progressive centralisation, was taken out of his hands; and he who, supreme in his own little circle, had been now a patriarch and now a despot, shrivelled into the mouthpiece of the Adjutant-General's office and the instrument of Head-quarters. The decisions of the commanding officer were appealed against, and frequently set aside. In the emphatic language of the East, he was made to eat dirt in the presence of his men. The Sipáhi, then, ceased to look up to him as the centre of his hopes and fears, and the commanding officer lost much of the interest which he before took in his men, when he knew how much their happiness and comfort depended upon his individual acts, and how the discipline and good conduct of the corps were the reflection of his personal efficiency.

And it happened that, about the same time, new objects of interest sprung up to render more complete the severance of the ties which had once bound the English officer to the native soldier. The second quarter of the nineteenth century in India was a period of progressive reform. We reformed our Government and we reformed ourselves. Increased facilities of intercourse with Europe gave a more European complexion to Society. English news, English books, above all, English gentlewomen, made their way freely and rapidly to India. The Overland Mail bringing news scarcely more than a month old of the last new European revolution; the book-club yielding its stores of light literature as fresh as is commonly obtained from circulating libraries at home; and an avatar of fair young English maidens, with the bloom of the Western summer on their cheeks, yielded attractions beside which the gossip of the lines and the feeble garrulity of the old Subahdár were very dreary and fatiguing. Little by little the Sipáhi officer shook out the loose folds of his Orientalism. Many had been wont, in the absence of other female society, to solace themselves with the charms of a dusky mate, and to spend much time in the recesses of the Zenana. Bad as it was, when tried in the crucible of Christian ethics, it was not without its military advantages. The English officer, so mated, learnt to speak the languages of the country, and to understand the habits and feelings of the people; and he cherished a kindlier

England in India.

feeling for the native races than he would have done if no such alliances had been formed. But this custom passed away with the cause that produced it. The English wife displaced the native mistress. A new code of morals was recognised; and the Zenana was proscribed. With the appearance of the English gentlewoman in the military cantonment there grew up a host of new interests and new excitements, and the regiment became a bore.

Staff employment.

Whilst these influences were sensibly weakening the attachment which had existed between the native soldier and his English officer, another deteriorating agent was at work with still more fatal effect. The Staff was carrying off all the best officers, and unsettling the rest. As the red line of British Empire extended itself around new provinces, and the administrative business of the State was thus largely increased, there was a demand for more workmen than the Civil Service could supply, and the military establishment of the Company was, therefore, indented upon for officers to fill the numerous civil and political posts thus opened out before them. Extensive surveys were to be conducted, great public works were to be executed, new irregular regiments were to be raised, and territories not made subject to the "regulations" were, for the most part, to be administered by military men. More lucrative, and held to be more honourable than common regimental duty, these appointments were eagerly coveted by the officers of the Company's army. The temptation, indeed, was great. The means of marrying, of providing for a family, of securing a retreat to Europe before enfeebled by years or broken down by disease, were presented to the officer by this detached employment. And if these natural feelings were not paramount, there was the strong incentive of ambition or the purer desire to enter upon a career of more active utility. The number of officers with a regiment was thus reduced; but numbers are not strength, and still fewer might have sufficed, if they had been a chosen few. But of those who remained some lived in a state of restless expectancy, others were sunk in sullen despair. It was not easy to find a Sipáhi officer, pure and simple, with no aspirations beyond his regiment, cheerful, content, indeed proud of his position. All that was gone. The officer ceased to rejoice in his work, and the men saw his heart was not with them.

There were some special circumstances, too, which at this

time—during the administrations of Lord Amherst and Lord William Bentinck—tended to aggravate these deteriorating influences both upon the officers and the men of the Sipáhi regiments. Since the subsidence of the spirit of disaffection, which had pervaded the Coast Army in 1806, there had been no obtrusive manifestations of discontent in the Sipáhi's mind. He had done his duty faithfully and gallantly in the great wars, which Lord Hastings had conducted to a triumphant issue; but, when peace came again, he again, after a while, began to take stock of his troubles and to listen to strange reports. One more illustration may be drawn from Madras, before the Bengal Army claims a monopoly of the record. In the early spring of 1822, a paper was dropped in the Cavalry Lines of Arkát, setting forth that the followers of Muhammad, having been subjected to the power of the English, suffered great hardships—that, being so subjected, their prayers were not acceptable to the Almighty, and that, therefore, in great numbers they were dying of cholera morbus—that the curse of God was upon them; and that, therefore, it behoved them to make a great effort for the sake of their religion. There were countless Hindus and Musulmans between Arkát and Delhi. But the Europeans being few, it would be easy to slay the whole in one day. Let them but combine, and the result would be certain. There was no time, it said, to be lost. The English had taken all the Jaghirs and Ináms of the people of the soil, and now they were about to deprive them of employment. A number of European regiments had been called for, and in the course of six months all the native battalions would be disbanded. Let, then, the senior Subahdár of each regiment instruct the other Subahdárs, and let them instruct the Jamadárs, and so on, till all the Sipáhis were instructed, and the same being done at Vellúr, at Chitúr, at Madras, and other places, then, on a given signal, the whole should rise on one day. The day fixed was Sunday, the 17th of March. A Naik and ten Sipáhis were to proceed at midnight to the house of each European, and kill him, without remorse, in his bed. This done, the regiments would be placed under the command of the native officers, and the Subahdárs should have the pay of Colonels. It was always thus. It is always thus. A little for the Faith, and all for the Pocket.

Muhammadan grievances.

From whomsoever this paper may have emanated, the attempt to corrupt the Sipáhis was a failure. It was picked up in the

Lines of the 6th Cavalry, and another nearly resembling it was dropped in the Lines of the 8th --but both were carried at once to the commanding officer of the station. Colonel Foulis took his measures with promptitude and vigour. He assembled the regimental commanders, imparted to them the contents of the paper, and desired them to place themselves in communication with the native officers whom they most trusted. Having done this, he wrote to the commandants of the several stations named in the paper. But they could see no signs of disaffection, and the appointed day passed by without even an audible murmur of discontent. But not many days afterwards, the Governor of Madras received by the post a letter in Hindustani, purporting to come from the principal native officers and Sipáhis of the Army, setting forth the grievances under which they suffered as a body. The complaint was that all the wealth and all the honour went to the white Sirdars, especially to the civilians, whilst for the soldier there was nothing but labour and grief. "If we Sipáhis take a country," they said, "by the sword, these whore-son cowardly civil Sirdars enter that country and rule over it, and in a short time fill their coffers with money and go to Europe—but, if a Sipáhi labour all his life, he is not five káoris the better." Under the Muhammadan Government it had been different, for, when victories were gained, Jaghirs were given to the soldiers, and high offices distributed among them. But, under the Company, everything was given to the Civil Service. "A single Collector's peon has an authority and greatness in the country which cannot be expressed. But that peon does not fight like a Sipáhi." Such, in effect, was the plaint of the native soldiery, as conveyed to Governor Munro. It may have been the work of an individual, as might have been also the papers picked up in the lines of Arkát; but it is certain that both documents expressed sentiments which may be supposed at all times to lie embedded in the Sipáhi mind, and which need but little to bring them, fully developed, above the surface.*

Sir Thomas Munro.

The relations between the English officer and the native soldier were better then than they had been sixteen years before. But these relations were sadly weakened, and a heavy

* It was to this event that Sir Thomas Munro alluded in his remarkable minute on the dangers of a Free Press in India.

blow was given to the discipline and efficiency of the Indian army, when, two years later, the military establishment of the Three Presidencies were reorganised. Then every regiment of two battalions became two separate regiments, and the officers attached to the original corps were told off alternately to its two parts—"all the odd or uneven numbers," said the General Order, "to the first, and the even numbers to the second;" by which process it happened that a large number of officers were detached from the men with whom they had been associated throughout many years of active service. The evil of this was clearly seen at the time, and a feeble compromise was attempted. "It is not intended," said the General Order, "that in carrying the present orders into effect, officers should be permanently removed from the particular battalion in which they may long have served and wished to remain, provided that by an interchange between officers standing the same number of removes from promotion, each could be retained in his particular battalion, and both are willing to make the exchange." In effect, this amounted to little or nothing, and a large number of officers drifted away from the battalions in which they had been reared from boyhood, and strangers glided into their place.

The Reorganisation.

May 6, 1824.

Bad as at any time must have been such a change as this, in its influence upon the morale of the Sipáhi army, the evil was greatly enhanced by falling upon evil times. The best preservative, and the best restorative of military spirit and discipline, is commonly a good stirring war. But the Sipáhi, though not unwilling to fight, was somewhat dainty and capricious about his fighting ground. A battle-field in Hindustan or the Dakhin was to his taste; but he was disquieted by the thought of serving in strange regions, of which he had heard only vague fables, beyond inaccessible mountain-ranges, or still more dreaded wildernesses of water. With the high-caste, fastidious Bengal Sipáhi the war with Burmah was not, therefore, a popular war. The Madras Sipáhi, more cosmopolitan and less nice, took readily to the transport vessel; and a large part of the native force was drawn from the Coast Army. But some Bengal regiments were also needed to take part in the operations of the war, and then the system began to fail us. To transport troops by sea from Calcutta to Rangún would have been an easy process.

The Burmese War.

But the Bengal Sipáhi had enlisted only for service in countries to which he could march; to take ship was not in his bond. The regiments, therefore, were marched to the frontier station of Chátgáon, and there assembled for the landward invasion of the Burmese country.

The Mutiny at Barrackpúr.

Without any apparent symptoms of discontent, some corps had already marched, when, in October, the incident occurred of which I am about to write, an incident which created a most powerful sensation from one end of India to the other, and tended greatly to impair the loyalty and discipline of the Bengal Sipáhi. The 47th Regiment had been warned for foreign service, and was waiting at Barrackpúr, a few miles from the Presidency, whilst preparations were being made for its march in the cold weather. To wait is often to repent. Inactive in cantonments during the rainy season, and in daily intercourse with the men of other regiments, who had been warned for the same service, the 47th, uninfluenced by any other external causes, would have lost any ardour which might have possessed them when first ordered to march against a barbarous enemy who had insulted their flag. But it happened that ominous tidings of disaster came to them from the theatre of war. The British troops had sustained a disaster at Ramú, the proportions of which had been grossly exaggerated in the recital, and it was believed that the Burmese, having cut up our battalions, or driven them into the sea, were sweeping on to the invasion of Bengal. The native newspapers bristled with alarming announcements of how the Commander-in-Chief had been killed in action and the Governor-General had poisoned himself in despair; and there was a belief throughout all the lower provinces of India that the rule of the Company was coming to an end. The fidelity of the Sipáhi army requires the stimulus of continued success. Nothing tries it so fatally as disaster. When, therefore, news came that the war had opened with a great failure, humilating to the British power, and all kinds of strange stories relating to the difficulties of the country to be traversed, the deadliness of the climate to be endured, and the prowess of the enemy to be encountered, forced their way into circulation in the Bazaars and in the Lines, the willingness which the Sipáhis had once shown to take part in the operations beyond the frontier began to subside, and they were eager to find a pretext for refusing to march on such hazardous service.

And, unhappily, one was soon found. There was a scarcity of available carriage-cattle for the movement of the troops. Neither bullocks nor drivers were to be hired, and fabulous prices were demanded from purchasers for wretched starvelings not equal to a day's journey. For the use of the regiments which had already marched, Bengal had been well-nigh swept out, and the reports which had since arrived rendered it difficult to persuade men voluntarily to accompany as camp-followers an expedition fraught with such peculiar perils. All the efforts of the Commissariat failed to obtain the required supply of cattle; and so the Sipáhis were told to supply themselves. In this conjuncture, it would seem that a new lie was circulated through the Lines of Barrackpúr. It was said that as the Bengal regiments could not, for want of cattle, be marched to Chátgáon, they would be put on board ship and carried to Rangún across the Bay of Bengal. Murmurs of discontent then developed into oaths of resistance. The regiments warned for service in Burmah met in nightly conclave, and vowed not to cross the sea.

Still foremost in this movement, the 47th Regiment was commanded by Colonel Cartwright. Rightly measuring the difficulty, and moved with compassion for the Sipáhi, who really had just ground for complaint, he offered to provide cattle from his private funds; and all the refuse animals, either too old or too young for service, were got together, and the Government offered to advance money for their purchase. But the terrible ban of "Too Late" was written across these conciliatory measures. The regiment was already tainted with the ineradicable virus of mutiny, which soon broke out on parade. The Sipáhis declared that they would not proceed to Burmah by sea, and that they would not march unless they were guaranteed the increased allowances known in the jargon of the East as "double batta." This was on the 30th of October. On the 1st of November, another parade was summoned. The behaviour of the Sipáhis was worse than before—violent, outrageous, not to be forgiven; and they remained masters of the situation throughout both the day and night. Then the Commander-in-Chief appeared on the scene. A hard, strict disciplinarian, with no knowledge of the native army, and a bitter prejudice against it, Sir Edward Paget was a man of the very metal to tread down insurrection with an iron heel, regardless both of causes and of consequences. He carried

with him to Barrackpúr two European regiments, a battery of European artillery, and a troop of the Governor-General's Body-guard. Next morning the native regiments found themselves in the presence of the English troops; but still they did not know the peril that awaited them, and, with a childlike obstinacy, they were not to be moved from their purpose of resistance. Some attempt was made at explanation—some attempt at conciliation. But it was feeble and ineffectual; perhaps not understood. They were told, then, that they must consent to march, or to ground their arms. Still not seeing the danger, for they were not told that the artillery guns were loaded with grape, and the gunners ready to fire,* they refused to obey the word; and so the signal for slaughter was given. The guns opened upon them. The mutineers were soon in panic flight. Throwing away their arms and accoutrements, they made for the river. Some were shot down; some were drowned. There was no attempt at battle. None had been contemplated. The muskets with which the ground was strewn were found to be unloaded.

Then the formalities of the military law were called in to aid the stern decisions of the grape-shot. Some of the leading mutineers were convicted, and hanged; and the regiment was struck out of the Army List. But this display of vigour, though it checked mutiny for the time, tended only to sow broadcast the seeds of future insubordinations. It created a bad moral effect throughout the whole of the Bengal army. From Bazaar to Bazaar the news of the massacre ran with a speed almost telegraphic. The regiments, which had already marched to the frontier, were discussing the evil tidings with mingled dismay and disgust before the intelligence, sent by special express, had reached the ears of the British chiefs. "They are your own men whom you have been destroying," said an old native officer; and he could not trust himself to say more.†

* It is doubtful, indeed, whether they knew that the guns were in the rear of the European regiments. [The account of this mutiny might have been written by one of the mutinous Sipáhis. In point of fact, all means were exhausted before force was resorted to. The Sipáhis knew thoroughly well their position, and they counted on the weakness and forbearance of their masters. But for the prompt action of Sir Edward Paget the whole army would have revolted.—G. B. M.]

† "Political Incidents of the first Burmese War." By T. C. Robertson, to whom was entrusted the political conduct of the war. [I can only affirm that

The Bengal regiments, with the expeditionary force, had soon a grievance of their own, and the remembrance of this dark tragedy increased the bitterness with which they discussed it. The high-caste men were writhing under an order which, on the occupation of Arakan, condemned the whole body of the soldiery to work, as labourers, in the construction of their barracks and lines. The English soldier fell to with a will; the Madras Sipáhi cheerfully followed his example. But the Bengal soldier asked if Brahmans and Rájputs were to be treated like Kúlis, and, for a while, there was an apprehension that it might become necessary to make another terrible example after the Barrackpúr pattern. But this was fortunately averted. General Morrison called a parade, and addressed the recusants. The speech, sensible and to the point, was translated by Captain Phillips; and so admirable was his free rendering of it, so perfect the manner in which he clothed it with familiar language, making every word carry a meaning, every sentence strike some chord of sympathy in the Sipáhi's breast, that when he had done, the high-caste Hindustanís looked at each other, understood what they read in their comrades' faces, and forthwith stripped to their work.

Thus was an incipient mutiny checked by a few telling words. And the sad event which had gone before might have been averted also if there had been as much tact and address as "promptitude and decision." A few sentences of well-chosen, well-delivered Hindustaní, on that fatal November morning, might have brought the Sipáhis back to reason and to loyalty.* But they had the benefit of neither wise counsel from within nor kindly exhortation from without. Deprived, by the reconstruction of the Army, of the officers whom they had long known and trusted, they were more than ever in need of external aid to bring them back to a right state of feeling. They wanted a

the crushing of the mutiny had the effect exactly contrary to that here recorded. It crushed the incipient feeling of disobedience which would otherwise have led to the worst results. None more rejoiced at it, none more admitted its justice, than the loyal Sipáhis.—G. B. M.]

[* When one recollects how many sentences of "well-chosen, well-delivered Hindustaní," were used in vain in 1857, one marvels the more at this condemnation of the one remedy which proved successful in 1825. Mutiny can never be crushed out by smooth words. The soul that will not nerve itself to have recourse to heroic measures will never successfully cope with revolt.—G. B. M.]

General of Division, such as Malcolm or Ochterlony, to re-awaken their soldierly instincts—their pride in their colours, their loyalty to their Salt. But, instead of such judicious treatment as would have shown them their own folly, as in a glass, the martinets of the Horse Guards, stern in their unsympathising ignorance, their ruthless prejudices, had, in our own territories, at the very seat of government, in the presence of no pressing danger, no other lessons to teach, no other remedies to apply, than those which were to be administered at the bayonet's point and the cannon's mouth.*

The Half-Batta Order.

With the return of peace came new disquietudes. A reign of Retrenchment commenced. Alarmed by the expenses of their military establishments, the Company sent out imperative orders for their reduction—orders more than once issued before, more than once disobeyed. Blows of this kind commonly fall upon the weakest—upon those least able to endure them. So it happened that the condition of the regimental officer having, by a variety of antecedent circumstances, been shorn of well-nigh all its advantages, was rendered still more grievous and intolerable by the curtailment of his pecuniary allowances. An order, known in military history as the Half-Batta Order, was passed, by which all officers stationed within a certain distance from the Presidency were deprived of a large percentage of their pay.† The order excited the utmost dismay throughout the Army; but the discontent which it engendered vented itself in words. Twice before the officers of the Company's army had resented similar encroachments, and had been prepared to strike in defence of their asserted rights. But this last blow did not rouse them to rebellion. Never before had justice and reason been so clearly upon their side; but, keenly as they felt their wrongs, they did

[* In 1857, the Sipáhis had generals of division like Hearsey, who knew them well, who spoke their language as well as they did, and who did all in his power "to awaken their soldierly instincts, their pride in their colours, their loyalty to their Salt." The result was general mutiny. And the same result would have followed the application of a similar remedy in 1825. I ask the intelligent reader to compare the two circumstances—1825 and 1857: the two remedies: the two results: and to draw his own conclusions.—G. B. M.]

† Or, in strict professional language, his allowances. The gross salary of an Indian officer was known as his "pay and allowances." The former, which was small, was enhanced by several substantial accessories, as tentage, house-rent, and batta, or field allowance.

not threaten the Government they served, but loyally protested against the treatment to which they had been subjected. The humours of which their memorials could not wholly relieve them, a Press, virtually free, carried off like a great conduit. The excitement expended itself in newspaper paragraphs, and gradually subsided. But it left behind it an after-growth of unanticipated evils. The little zeal that was left in the regimental officer was thus crushed out of him, and the Sipáhi, who had watched the decline, little by little, of the power once vested in the English captain, now saw him injured and humiliated by his Government, without any power of resistance; saw that he was no longer under the special protection of the State, and so lost all respect for an instrument so feeble and so despised.

And as though it were a laudable achievement thus to divest the native soldier of all fear of his European officer, another order went forth during the same interval of peace, abolishing the punishment of the lash throughout the Sipáhi army in India. So little was he a drunkard and a ruffian, that it was a rare spectacle to see a black soldier writhing under the drummer's cat. But when the penalty, though still retained in the European army, became illegal and impossible among them, the native soldiery felt that another blow was struck at military authority—another tie of restraint unloosed. It was looked upon less as a boon than as a concession—less as the growth of our humanity than of our fear. So the Sipáhi did not love us better, but held us a little more in contempt.

Abolition of Corporal Punishment.

There were great diversities of sentiment upon this point, and some, whose opinions were entitled to respect, believed in the wisdom of the measure. But the weight of authority was against it,* and, some ten years afterwards, Hardinge revived

* Numerous illustrations might be cited, but none more significant than the following anecdote, told by Mr. Charles Raikes: "I recollect a conversation which I had in 1839 with an old pensioned Subahdár. I inquired of him how the measure would work. He replied, that the abolition of the punishment would induce some classes to enter the Army who had not done so before. 'But, Sahib,' said the old man, '*Fauj be-dar hogya.*' (The Army has ceased to fear.)" Another native officer said: "The English, to manage us rightly, should hold the whip in one hand and the *mehtais* (sweetmeats) in the other. You have dropped the whip, and now hold out sweets to us in both hands." [On this I cannot help remarking that if the Army had ceased to fear, and that cessation of corporal punishment had caused it to deteriorate no appeals to its loyalty in words of well-chosen Hindustaní, spoken even by "a Malcolm or an Ochterlony," would have remedied the evil.—G. B. M.]

what Bentinck had abolished. But even before the act of abolition, by a variety of concurrent causes, the character and the conduct of the Sipáhi Army were so impaired, that an officer who had served long with them, and knew them well, declared, in his evidence before a Committee of Parliament, that "in all the higher qualifications of soldiers, in devotedness to the service, readiness for any duty they may be called upon to perform, cheerfulness under privations, confidence and attachment to their officers, unhesitating and uncalculating bravery in the field, without regard either to the number or the character of the enemy, the native soldier is allowed by all the best-informed officers of the service, by those who have most experience, and are best acquainted with their character, to have infinitely deteriorated."*

Evidence of Captain Macan in 1832.

CHAPTER III.

The War in Afghanistan.

Peace is never long-lived in India, and the Army was soon again in the bustle and excitement of active service. There was a long war; and, if it had been a glorious one, it might have had a salutary effect upon the disposition of the Sipáhi. But when all his soldierly qualities were thus, as it were, at the last gasp, the War in Afghanistan came to teach him a new lesson, and the worst, at that time, which he could have been taught. He learnt then, for the first time, that a British army is not invincible in the field; that the great "Ikhbál," or Fortune, of the Company, which had carried us gloriously through so many great enterprises, might sometimes disastrously fail us; he saw the proud colours of the British nation defiled in the bloody snows of Afghanistan, and he believed that our reign was hastening to a close. The charm of a century of conquest was then broken. In all parts of Upper India it was the talk of the Bazaars that the tide of victory had turned against the Faringhis, and that they would soon be driven into the sea. Then the Sikh arose and the Maráthá bestirred himself, rejoicing in our humiliation, and eagerly watching the next move. Then it was that those amongst us, who knew best what was seething in the heart of Indian society, were "ashamed to look a native in the face." The crisis was a perilous one, and the most experienced Indian statesmen regarded it with dismay, not knowing what a day [illegible]t produce. They had no faith in our allies, no faith in our soldiery. An Army of Retribution, under a wise and trusted leader, went forth to restore the tarnished lustre of the British name; but ominous whispers soon came from his camp that that Army was tainted—that the Sipáhi regiments, no longer assured and fortified by the sight of that ascendant Star of Fortune which once had shone with so bright and steady a light, shrunk from entering the passes which had been the grave of so many of their comrades. It was too true. The Sikhs

were tampering with their fidelity. Brahman emissaries were endeavouring to swear them on the Holy Water not to advance at the word of the English commander. Nightly meetings of delegates from the different regiments were being held; and, perhaps, we do not even now know how great was the danger. But the sound discretion and excellent tact of Pollock, aided by the energies of Henry Lawrence and Richmond Shakespear, brought the Sipáhis to a better temper, and, when the word was given, they entered the dreaded passes, and, confiding in their leader, carried victory with them up to the walls of the Afghan capital.

The Sipáhi did his duty well under Pollock. He had done his duty well under Nott, who spoke with admiration of his "beautiful regiments," and manfully resented any imputation cast upon them. And when, after the British Army had been disentangled from the defiles of Afghanistan, war was made against the Amirs of Sindh, the Sipáhi went gallantly to the encounter with the fierce Bilúchi fighting-man, and Napier covered him with praise. Then there was another war, and the native regiments of the Company went bravely up the slopes of Mahárájpúr, and turned not aside from the well-planted, well-manned batteries of the turbulent Maráthás. But peace came, and with peace its dangers. Sindh had become a British province, and the Sipáhi, who had helped to conquer, had no wish to garrison the country.

Results of the Conquest of Sindh.

The direct and immediate result of well-nigh every annexation of Territory, by which our Indian empire has been extended, may be clearly discerned in the shattered discipline of the Sipáhi Army. To extend our empire without increasing our means of defence was not theoretically unreasonable; for it might have been supposed that as the number of our enemies was reduced by conquest and subjection, the necessity for the maintenance of a great standing army was diminished rather than increased. These annexations, it was said, consolidated our own territories by eradicating some native principality in the midst of them, or else substituted one frontier, and perhaps a securer one, for another. But the security of our empire lay in the fidelity of our soldiery. To diminish the number of our enemies, and to extend the area of the country to be occupied by our troops, was at the same time to diminish the importance of the Sipáhi, and to render his service more irksome to him;

for it sent him to strange places far away from his home, to do the work of military Police. It frittered away in small detached bodies the limited European force at the disposal of the Indian Government, or massed large ones on a distant frontier. This extension of territory, indeed, whilst it made us more dependent upon our native troops, made that dependence more hazardous. The conversion of Sindh into a British province, by which our long line of annexations was commenced, had burnt this truth into our history before Lord Dalhousie appeared upon the scene. For indeed it was a sore trial to the Sipáhi to be posted in a dreary outlying graveyard of this kind, far away from his home and his people—far beyond the limits of the empire in which he had enlisted to serve. And when it was proposed to take from him the additional allowances, which had been issued to the troops, on active service in an enemy's country, on the plea that they had subsided into the occupation of British cantonments, he resented this severe logic, and rose against the retrenchment. He did not see why, standing upon the same ground, he should not receive the same pay, because the red line of the British boundary had been extended by a flourish of the pen, and the population of the country had by the same magic process been converted into British subjects; and still less easily could he reconcile himself to the decision when he thought that the Sipáhi himself had contributed to bring about the result that was so injurious to him; that he had helped to win a province for his employers, and, in return for this good service, had been deprived of part of his pay. In the old time, when the Company's troops conquered a country, they had profited in many ways by the achievement, but now they were condemned to suffer as though gallantry were a crime.

In more than a camel-load of documents the story lies recorded, but it must be briefly narrated here.

Mutiny of the 34th.

In the month of February, 1844, Governor-General Ellenborough, being then absent from his Council in the Upper Provinces, received the disheartening intelligence tha the 34th Sipáhi Regiment of Bengal, which had been warned for service in Sindh, had been halted at Firúzpúr. It had refused to enter our newly-acquired province, unless its services were purchased by the grant of the additional allowances given to the soldiery beyond the Indus in time of war. The distressing character of the

intelligence was aggravated by many circumstances of time and place. In a moment, Ellenborough's quick perceptions had grappled the whole portentous truth. Our troops were mutinying for pay, on the Panjáb frontier, almost in the presence of the disorderly masses of Sikh troops, who, gorged with the donatives they had forced from a weak Government, were then dominating the empire. Other regiments were coming up, on the same service, who might be expected to follow the rebellious lead of the 34th; and so Ellenborough and Napier might have found themselves with the province they had just conquered on their hands, and no means of securing its military occupation, without destroying the authority of Government by humiliating concessions.

In this conjuncture, the first thing that Ellenborough did was the best that could have been done. He delegated to the Commander-in-Chief the full powers of the Governor-General in Council for the suppression of mutiny in the Army. But how were those powers to be exercised? Doubt and perplexity, and something nearly approaching consternation, pervaded Army Head-Quarters. The 7th Bengal Cavalry, on the line of march to the frontier, had broken into open mutiny, and in spite of all the efforts of their officers, who had guaranteed to pay them from their own funds the allowances they demanded, the troopers had refused to obey the trumpet-call to march, and were halted, therefore, sullen and obstinate, in the neighbourhood of Firúzpúr. Some companies of Native Artillery had already refused to march, and there were rumours of other regiments being on the eve of declaring their refusal. The most obvious course, under such circumstances, was to march the recusant regiments back to one or more of the large stations, as Lodiáná and Mírath, where European troops were posted, and there to disband them. But sinister whispers were abroad that the sympathies of the Europeans, in this instance, were with the native soldiery. One regiment of the Line, it was reported, had openly declared that it would not act against the Sipáhis, who were demanding no more than their rights. There were Sikh emissaries from beyond the Satlaj doing their best to debauch the Sipáhis by offering both their sympathy and their assistance. Dick, the General of Division, declared his belief that an order to the mutineers to march back for disbandment would not be obeyed; and a violent collision at such a time would have set the whole frontier in a blaze. The

project of disbandment was, therefore, suspended; and all the more readily, as even at Head-Quarters there was a belief that, although the recusant troops might have had no reasonable ground of complaint, the actual state of the case with respect to the Sindh pay and allowances had not been properly explained to them.*

Uncondemned, the mutinous regiments were ordered back to the stations from which they had marched, to await the result of a reference to the Governor-General; and other corps, warned for the Sindh service, came up to the frontier. Dick's first and wisest impulse had been to halt the regiments marching to Firúzpúr, in order that they might not run the risk of contamination by the tainted corps, or the corrupting influence of the Sikhs. But, by some strange fatality, this judicious measure had been revoked; the regiments marched to the frontier; and Dick's difficulties increased. The 69th refused to embark, unless the old Indus allowances were guaranteed to them. By the exertions of the officers, one-half of the regiment was afterwards brought round to a sense of their duty; they loaded their carriage cattle, marched to the banks of the river, and declared their willingness to embark on the boats. They ought to have been embarked at once with the colours of their regiment. Their comrades would then have followed them; and other regiments, moved by the good example, might also have asserted their fidelity. But the golden opportunity was lost; and all example was in the way of evil. The 4th Regiment, trusted overmuch by its commanders, followed the 69th into mutiny at Firúzpúr, and such was the conduct of the Sipáhis, that Philip Goldney, a man of equal courage and capacity, suddenly called to the scene of tumult, drew upon one the foremost of the mutineers, and a younger officer, moved to passion by their violence, struck out with a bayonet, and wounded two soldiers in the face. Those were days when

The 69th and the 4th.

* The extraordinary allowances—the withdrawal of which had created all this ill-feeling—were originally granted when the troops crossed the Indus in 1838, on their march to Kandahar and Kábul. They were withdrawn from the troops in Sindh early in 1840, when there seemed to be no longer any extraordinary duties to be performed by them. When the insurrection broke out in Afghanistan, and retributory operations were commenced, the allowances were restored; but they were again reduced from the 1st of July 1843, after the close of the war in Afghanistan and the conquest of Sindh.

mutiny did not mean massacre, and the Sipáhi did not turn upon his officer. But neither regiment would march. On many hard-fought fields Sir Robert Dick had proved himself to be a good soldier, but he was not equal to such a crisis as this: so Ellenborough at once ordered him to be cushioned in some safer place.

In the meanwhile, aid to the embarrassed Government was coming from an unexpected quarter. The 64th Regiment of Sipáhis had formed part of that unfortunate detachment known in history as Wilde's Brigade, which had been sent, before Pollock's arrival at Pesháwar, to carry the Khaibar Pass, without guns and without provisions. It had afterwards served with credit during the second Afghan campaign, since the close of which it had been cantoned at the frontier station of Lodiáná. The Sipáhis had manifested a strong reluctance to serve in Sindh, and had addressed to the Adjutant-General more than one *arzí*, or petition, couched in language of complaint almost akin to mutiny. From Lodiáná the regiment had been ordered down to Banáras. On the 15th of February it reached Ambálah, then become the Head-Quarters of the Sirhind division of the Army, which General Fast, an old officer of the Company's service, commanded. Well able to converse in the language of the country, and knowing, from long intercourse with them, the character and feelings of the native soldiery, Fast believed that something might still be done to bring the regiment back to its allegiance. So he halted the 64th at Ambálah, and summoned the native officers to his presence. Questioned as to the disposition of the regiment, they one and all declared that the men had never refused to march to Sindh; that they were still willing to march; that only on the evening before the native officers had severally ascertained the fact from their respective companies; that the matter of the allowances would not influence the Sipáhis; and that the mutinous *arzís* had emanated only from a few bad characters in the regiment; perhaps, it was added, from a Sipáhi who had been already dismissed. From these and other representations, it appeared to the General that the 64th really desired to wipe out the stain, which the *arzís* had fixed upon their character, and, believing in this, he recommended that they should be permitted to march to Sindh. Under certain stringent conditions, the Commander-in-Chief adopted the recommendation; and so Moseley, with his Sipáhis, again turned his face towards the Indus.

The 64th.

The disposition of the regiment now seemed to be so good, it was marching with such apparent cheerfulness towards the dreaded regions, and setting so good an example to others, that the Commander-in-Chief was minded to stimulate its alacrity, and to reward its returning fidelity, by a voluntary tender of special pay and pension, and relaxations of the terms of service.* The language of these instructions was somewhat vague, and Moseley, eager to convey glad tidings to his men, turned the vagueness to account by exaggerating the boon that was offered to them. And so the error of Head-Quarters was made doubly erroneous, and the Governor-General was driven wild by the blunder of the Commander-in-Chief.

Whatsoever Head-Quarters might have intended to grant, was contingent upon the good conduct of the regiment. But before the letter had been received by Moseley, on the line of march, mutiny had again broken out in the ranks of the 64th. At Múdki, now so famous in the annals of Indian warfare, the regiment, not liking the route that had been taken, assumed a threatening front, and attempted to seize the colours.† The petulance of the hour was suppressed, and next day the regiment resumed its march. But transitory as was the outbreak, it was mutiny in one of its worst forms. On the second day, the Colonel received, at Tibí, the letter from Head-Quarters, on the subject of the additional allowances. The outbreak at Múdkí had converted it into an historical document, to be quietly put aside for purposes of future record. It was, indeed, a dead letter. The fatal words "too late" were already written across

* "In addition to the full or marching batta always allowed to regiments serving in Sindh, still higher advantages in regard to pay, together with the benefits of the regulated family pension to the heirs of those who may die from disease contracted on service." The commanding officer was also instructed "to make known to the corps that it shall be brought back to a station in the provinces in one year in the event of the ensuing season proving unhealthy, and under no circumstances be kept in Sindh beyond two years, while the indulgence of furlough to visit their homes will, in the latter case, be extended to the men in the proportion enjoyed by corps located at stations within the British frontier."—[*The Adjutant-General to Colonel Moseley, March* 15, 1844.] Sindh, however, had become a British "province," and was "within the British frontier."

† It was advisable to march the troops proceeding to Sindh along a route which would not bring them into contact with other regiments, either coming from that province or stationed on the frontier; and it was specially desirable to mask Firúzpúr.

the page. But Moseley laid eager hands upon it, as a living reality, for present uses. The 64th was plainly in an excitable state. It had mutinied once on the march, and, without the application of some very powerful sedative, it might mutiny again. The outbreak at Múdkí had not been reported to Head-Quarters. It might pass into oblivion as an ugly dream of the past; and the future might be rendered peaceful and prosperous by the letter of the Adjutant-General. So Moseley, having caused it to be translated into Hindustáni, summoned a parade, and ordered it to be read aloud to his men.

Tremendous as was this error—for it tendered to the mutinous the reward intended only for the faithful—its proportions were dwarfed by the after-conduct of the infatuated Colonel. He put a gloss of his own on the Head-Quarters' letter, and told the regiment that they would receive the old Indus allowances given to Pollock's Army.* Upon which they set up a shout of exultation. And then the 64th pursued its journey to Sindh.

The horrible mistake which had thus been committed soon began to bear bitter fruit. The inevitable pay-day came; and Moseley, like a man who has silenced the clamorous demands of the Present by drawing a forged bill upon the Future, now saw his gigantic folly staring him in the face. The crisis came at Shikarpúr. The Indus war-allowances were not forthcoming, and the 64th refused in a body to receive their legitimate pay.

George Hunter.

There was then, under Governor Napier, commanding the troops in Sindh, an old Sipáhi officer, familiarly and affectionately known throughout the Army as George Hunter. Of a fine presence, of a kindly nature, and of a lively temperament, he led all men captive by the sunny influence of his warm heart and his flowing spirits; whilst his manly courage and resolution commanded a wider admiration and respect. Of his conspicuous gallantry in action he carried about with him the honourable insignia in an arm maimed and mutilated by the crashing downward blow of a Ját swordsman, as he was forcing one of the gates of Bharatpúr. In the whole wide circle of the Army, there was scarcely one man whom the Sipáhi more loved and honoured; scarcely one whose

* This was known among the Sipáhis as "Pollock's Batta." It made up the soldier's pay to twelve rupees a month.

appearance on the scene at this moment could have had a more auspicious aspect. But there are moods in which we turn most angrily against those whom we most love; and General Hunter in this emergency was as powerless as Colonel Moseley.

George Hunter was not a man to coquet with mutiny. He saw at a glance the magnitude of the occasion, and he was resolute not to encourage its further growth by any inopportune delay. The short twilight of the Indian summer was already nearly spent when news reached him that the regiment had refused to receive its pay. Instantly calling a parade, he declared his intention of himself paying the troops. Darkness had now fallen upon the scene; but lamps were lit, and the General commenced his work. The light company, as the one that had evinced the most turbulent spirit, was called up first; the Sipáhis took their pay to a man, and were dismissed to their Lines. Of the company next called, four men had refused to receive their pay, when Moseley went up to the General, and told him that the whole regiment would take their money quietly, if disbursed to them by their own officers. Hunter had once refused this, but now he consented, and again the effort to flatter the corps into discipline was miserably unsuccessful. No sooner was this reluctant consent wrung from the General, than the parade was broken up with a tumultuous roar. Filling the air with shouts, sometimes shaped into words of derision and abuse, the Sipáhis flocked to their Lines. In vain Hunter ordered them to fall in; in vain he implored them to remember that they were soldiers. They turned upon him with the declaration that they had been lured to Sindh by a lie; and when he still endeavoured to restore order and discipline to the scattered rabble into which the regiment had suddenly crumbled, they threw stones and bricks at the fine old soldier and the other officers who had gone to his aid.

Mutiny of the 64th.

Nothing more could be done on that night; so Hunter went to his quarters, and waited anxiously for the dawn. A morning parade had been previously ordered, and when the General went to the ground, he saw to his exceeding joy, that the 64th were already drawn up—"as fine-looking and steady a body of men," he said, "as he could wish to see." No signs of disorder greeted him; and as he inspected company after company, calling upon all who had complaints to make to come forward, the regiment preserved its staid and orderly demeanour, and it seemed as if a

great shame held them all in inactivity and silence.* Returning then to the head of the column, drawn up left in front, Hunter proceeded to resume the work which had been broken off so uproariously on the preceding evening. Ten men of one company refused their pay, but none others followed their example. All now seemed to be proceeding to a favourable issue; and Hunter believed that the favourable disposition which had begun to show itself might be confirmed by a suitable address. So he prepared himself to harangue them.

The ways of the Sipáhi are as unaccountable as the ways of a child. It is impossible to fix the limits of his anger, or rightly to discern the point at which his good temper has really returned. Unstable and inconsistent, his conduct baffles all powers of human comprehension. So it happened that just on the seeming verge of success the ground crumbled away under Hunter's feet. As each company had been called up to receive its pay, the men had piled their arms to the word of command. But when the word was given to un-pile, there was an immediate shudder of hesitation, which seemed to be caught by one company from another, until it pervaded the whole regiment. Each man seemed to read what was in his neighbour's heart, and without any previous concert, therefore, they clung to each other in their disobedience. Three Grenadier Sipáhis took their muskets, and were promoted on the spot; but not another man followed their example. The regiment had again become a rabble. Nothing now could reduce them to order.

Until the blazing June sun was rising high in the heavens, Hunter and the regimental officers remained on the parade-ground, vainly endeavouring to persuade the Sipáhis to return to their duty. They had only one answer to give—their Colonel and their Adjutant had promised them what they had not received. If the General would guarantee them the old Indus war-allowances, they would serve as good soldiers; if not, they wished to be discharged, and return to their homes. All through the day, and all through the night, without divesting themselves of their uniform, without going to their lines to cook or to eat, the mutineers remained on the ground, sauntering about in the neighbourhood of their piled arms, and discussing their wrongs.

* Only one man came forward, and his complaint was that he had been passed over in promotion.

Day broke, and found them still on the ground. But hunger and fatigue had begun to exhaust the energies of their resistance, and when Hunter appeared again on the scene, accompanied only by his aide-de-camp, and beat to arms, the men fell in, took their muskets, and evinced some signs of contrition. Then the General spoke to them, saying that he would receive at his quarters a man from each company, and hear what he had to say on the part of his comrades. Satisfied with this promise, and being no longer irritated by the presence of the officers who had deceived them, the 64th allowed the parade to be quietly dismissed, and went to their Lines. At the appointed hour, the delegates from the several regiments waited on the General, and each man told the same story of the deception that had been practised upon the regiment. They had been promised "General Pollock's Batta," and the twelve rupees which they had expected had dwindled down into eight.

With this evidence before him, the General removed Colonel Moseley from the command of the station and from the command of the regiment,* and ordered the 64th to march to Sukkhar, on their way back to our older provinces. It was an anxious time; a hazardous march. So Hunter went with them. But the hot stage of the fever had passed, and the paroxysm seemed to have left them feeble and sore-spent. Unresistingly they went to Sukkhar, and encamped in the presence of European troops; and George Hunter, thanking God that the peril was over, and that not a drop of blood had been shed, then took upon himself the responsibility of pardoning the regiment as a body, and bringing to punishment only the worst of the individual offenders.† Such moderation could hardly be misunderstood at a time when there was present power to enforce the decrees of a sterner justice. So he addressed the regiment on parade, told them that he pardoned all but the leading mutineers, who would be tried by Court-martial; and he trusted that the mercy thus shown to them would not be thrown away, that they would repent of their misconduct and return to their allegiance. And perhaps the provocation which

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* Colonel Moseley was afterwards tried by court-martial, and cashiered.

† Thirty-nine prisoners were sent to trial, of whom one only was acquitted. Six were ordered for capital punishment, and the sentence of death passed upon the others was commuted to imprisonment and hard labour for various terms.

they had received was ample warrant for the leniency of their treatment.*

But the embarrassments of the Government did not end here. Whatsoever might be the punishment of the offence, it could not afford a remedy for the evil. The mutinous regiments might be disbanded, and their ringleaders might be hanged by the neck, or blown to atoms from the guns; but still there would be no answer to the question of how was Sindh to be garrisoned with British troops? It had been the design of the Government to employ only Bengal regiments on that service, seeking aid in other quarters from Madras. But the Bengal Army had broken down under the experiment; and there was small hope, after what had passed, of its ever being induced, except by humiliating concessions, to look that hated province in the face. There were, however, two other Presidencies, and two other Armies, not so nice as Bengal; and the defence of Sindh might be entrusted to Bombay or Madras regiments. If such had been the design in the first instance, it might, under judicious management, have been successfully carried into effect. But after such an example as had been set by the Bengal regiments, there was small consolation to be drawn from the prospect of loyal service to be rendered by their comrades. Already, indeed, were there signs that the disposition to strike for higher pay which had manifested itself among the Bengal troops was not confined to the Sipáhis of that "pampered and petted" Army. The Bombay regiments were untainted;† but a mutinous spirit had again displayed itself among the native soldiery of the Coast Army.‡

* There is something very touching in the humility which pervades the letters written at this time by George Hunter to Lord Ellenborough and Sir Charles Napier. He asks to be pardoned for all shortcomings, in consideration of the difficulty of the circumstances. "I never could write," he says at the end of one letter, "and old age does not improve a man in any way, except, I trust, in seeing his own failings and praying for mercy."

† The Bombay Army was said at that time to have more duty on its hands than it could perform without a severe strain, and the Bombay Government were clamouring for an augmentation.

‡ There had been several recent instances of extreme insubordination, amounting, indeed, to mutiny, in the Madras Army. The 52nd Native Infantry had mutinied at Asigarh and Máligáon; there had been a mutiny of the Madras troops at Sikandarábád; and the 2nd and 41st Regiments had shown a bad spirit, when ordered to embark for China. The 3rd and 4th Native Cavalry regiments had also mutinied; the former in 1838, the latter in 1842.

The first symptom of this was in a Cavalry regiment at Jabalpúr. Among the results of an extension of empire without a corresponding augmentation of our military force, are frequent violations of old Presidential limits in the location of our troops, which, however unobjectionable they may appear at the Adjutant-General's office, are seldom carried out without some disturbance of our military system. It might seem to be of small consequence whether the station at which a regiment was posted were within the limits of one Presidency or another; but if a Madras regiment were called upon to serve in the Bengal Presidency, or a Bombay regiment in Madras, or any other departure from ordinary rule was decreed, the Government was fortunate if it were not seriously perplexed and embarrassed by the results. Now, the Madras Army, though, as has been said, more cosmopolitan and less nice than that of Bengal, and not deterred by caste prejudices from proceeding to strange places, suffered even more than the Bengal troops from being ordered to distant stations, because the family of the Madras soldier followed his regiment, whilst the belongings of his Bengal comrade remained in their native village. The removal of the family from one station to another was a sore trouble and a heavy expense to the Madras Sipáhi; and whatever increased the distance to be traversed was, therefore, a grievance to him.

Mutiny of the 6th Madras Cavalry.

To the Cavalry it was especially a grievance, for the troopers were principally well-born Muhammadans, and the rigid seclusion in which their women were kept greatly increased the cost of their conveyance from one station to another. The 6th Cavalry had been more than commonly harassed in this respect, when, towards the close of 1843, just as they were expecting to get their route for the favourite cavalry station of Arkát, they received orders to march from Kámpati to Jabalpúr, in the valley of the Narbadá, which, in consequence of the demand for Bengal troops on the Indus, it had been necessary to occupy with regiments from Madras. The sharp disappointment, however, was in some measure mitigated by the assurance that the service on which they were required was but temporary, and that they would soon return within the proper limits of their own Presidency. They went, therefore, leaving their families behind them; but when they reached Jabalpúr, they found that they were to be permanently located there upon lower allowances than they had expected, that they must send

for their families from Kámpati, and that their next march would be nine hundred miles southward to Arkát.

Only by savings from their pay at the higher rates could the troopers hope to defray these extraordinary expenses. On the lower rates of pay it was impossible; for the greater part of their earnings was remitted for the support of their absent families, and what remained was barely enough to keep together body and soul. When, therefore, they found that they were to receive these lower rates at Jabalpúr, they broke into open manifestations of discontent, and bound themselves by oaths to stand by each other whilst they resisted the unjust decree. The first few days of December were, therefore, days of sore vexation and disturbance to the officers of the 6th, and most of all to the Commandant, Major Litchfield, to whose want of personal sympathy with their sufferings the Sipáhis, reasonably or unreasonably, attributed a great part of their affliction. The conduct of the men was violent and outrageous. They were with difficulty induced to saddle and mount for exercise; and when the trumpet sounded for the canter, they loosened rein, urged their horses forward at a dangerous pace, and raising the religious war-cry of "Dín! dín!" broke into tumultuous disorder. Brought back to something like discipline, the regiment was dismissed; but throughout the day the greatest excitement prevailed among them, and a large body of troopers marched in a defiant manner through the lines to the tent of a favourite officer, declaring that they would obey his orders, and serve under him, and beseeching him to place himself at their head. On the following day the excitement had increased. The troop-officers went among their men, endeavouring to pacify them. But they could report nothing more satisfactory than that the troops were in a frantic state, and that if Litchfield ventured on parade next morning the result would be fatal to him.

Major Litchfield.

Capt. Byng.

Undeterred by this, the Major would have held the parade, but the Brigadier commanding the station, to whom, in due course, all the circumstances were reported, caused it to be countermanded, and an Inspection Parade under his own command ordered in its stead. To this the regiment sullenly responded; and when the Brigadier addressed them, saying that he was willing to hear their complaints, many of the men stepped forward and presented him with petitions, which were given over to the troop-officers, to be forwarded to him through

the regular official channels. But, although it was plain that there was a bitter feeling of resentment against Litchfield, no act of violence was committed at that parade. And it happened that before its dismissal a letter reached the Brigadier announcing that the higher allowances were to be given to the men; and so the active danger was passed. But the disturbance which had been engendered did not soon pass away; the Sipáhis remained sullen and discontented, and for some days it appeared to the Brigadier not improbable that he would be compelled to call the Infantry and Artillery to his assistance. But the Madras Army was spared this calamity of bloodshed; and after a little while the regiment returned to the quiet and orderly performance of its duty.

As the old year closed upon the scene of mutiny in the Madras Cavalry, so, very soon, the new year opened upon a kindred incident in the Madras Infantry. When it was found that the Bengal troops were reluctant to serve, under the proposed terms, in the Sindh province, and serious embarrassment was, thereby, likely to be occasioned to the Supreme Government, the Madras authorities, believing that the crisis was one in which it behoved every one to do his best, promptly and vigorously, for the salvation of the State, determined, on a requisition from the Government of Bombay, to send two infantry regiments to Sindh.* The Sipahis were to embark on board transport vessels at Madras, to touch at Bombay, and thence to proceed to Karáchí. One of these regiments, the 47th, was in orders for Moulmein, on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal—a station at which, being beyond Presidential limits, extra allowances, known as field-batta and rations, were paid to the troops. Ignorant, it would appear, of the Bengal regulations, the Madras Government, represented by the Marquis of Tweedale, who held the double office of Governor and Commander-in-Chief, guaranteed to the regiments ordered to Sindh the allowances received at Moulmein; and under these conditions the 47th embarked for Bombay.

Mutiny of the Madras 47th.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Goverment had been advised of the unauthorised measures of the Madras authorities Chafing under such usurpation of the powers and prerogatives of the Governor-General, Ellenborough sent orders

* Sir Charles Napier had made an urgent call on Bombay, which, Bombay not being able to comply with it, passed on to Madras.

for the detention of the Madras regiment at Bombay, and it was disembarked on its arrival.* There the Madras Sipáhis learnt that the advantages of foreign service, promised to them at Madras, and on the faith of which they had set their faces towards Sindh, were disallowed. The greater part of their pay up to the end of March had already been disbursed to them, for the benefit of their families whom they left behind, and now they found, in the middle of February, that the scanty residue, on which they had relied for their own support, was by these retrenchments taken from them, and that, far away from their homes, starvation stared them in the face. It was not strange that they should have regarded this as a cruel breach of faith; and that they should have resented it. They had been promised rations, and they asked for them, and when they found they were not likely to be supplied, they manifested their discontent, after the wonted fashion, by breaking out on parade. When the word of command was given for them to march to their Lines, by fours from the left, they stood fast. The word was repeated, but still they stood fast; and when the Adjutant rode up to the leading section and asked the men if they had not heard the word of command, they answered sullenly that they had heard it; and when a Native officer asked them why they did not move, they told him that they wanted food, and that they would not stir without it.

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When the order to advance was again given, the regiment moved off; but only to renew on the following morning the exhibition of disobedience and discontent. Paraded before the General commanding the garrison, the regiment soon evinced signs of being in the same mood. After inspection, when the order was given to march by companies to their respective Lines, the Grenadiers stepped off, but presently wavered and halted; and when their captain, having ordered their arms, went off to report their conduct to the commanding officer, they insisted on following him in a body, declaring that if they then lost their chance of representing their hard case to the General, they might never find it again. Another company was even more violent in its demands. When the word of command was

* Intelligence of the change of destination was communicated to the officers during the voyage. It should be stated that one detachment of the regiment mutinied on board the *John Line* transport vessel; but the discontent then manifested arose from circumstances unconnected with the after-causes of disaffection.

given to advance at the quick march, a man from the ranks cried out "Right about face," and the whole company stood fast, as did other parts of the column. Taken in the act of flagrant mutiny, the Sipáhi was disarmed, and sent to the guard, whither the greater part of the company followed, declaring that they also would go to the guard, that they wanted rice, and must have it.

After a while order was restored. The General addressed the European and Native officers, and told them to assure the men, that any complaints advanced in a soldierly manner would be inquired into and any grievances redressed, but that such conduct as had been displayed on parade could not be overlooked. The regiment was then moved off to its Lines, some of the ringleaders being carried off as prisoners; and an advance of money, at first reluctantly received, stifled the further progress of mutiny. Here, then, the story may end. The Madras Army was not destined to supply the want accruing from the defective loyalty of Bengal. It broke down at a critical time; but only under such a weight of mismanagement as might have crushed out the fidelity of the best mercenaries in the world.

In these, as in instances above cited, by conflicts of authority and variations of system, the Sipáhi was not unreasonably alarmed for the integrity of his pay; and although we may condemn the manner in which he manifested his discontent, we must not think too harshly of the tenacity with which he asserted his rights. If an English soldier strikes for more pay, it is in most cases only another name for more drink. He seeks it, too often, as a means of personal indulgence. There is nothing to render less greedy his greed. But the avarice of the Sipáhi was purified by domestic affection, by a tender regard for the interests of others, and that strong feeling of family honour which in India renders Poor Laws an useless institution. He had so many dependents with whom to divide his slender earnings, that any unexpected diminution of his pay excited alarm lest those who were nearest and dearest to him should in his absence be reduced to want. The honour of his family was threatened; he chafed under the thought; and if he took unsoldierly means of asserting his rights, we must remember the provocation, and not forget those peculiarities of national sentiment which lighten the dark colours in which all such resistance of authority presents itself to European eyes.

Eventually Bombay troops were sent to garrison Sindh, and the province became a part of the Bombay Presidency. But it is hard to say how much these first abortive attempts to provide for its defence shook the discipline of the Sipáhi Army. For the evil was one to which it was difficult to apply a remedy; and the authorities were greatly perplexed and at variance one with another. The disbandment of a mutinous regiment is, in such a case, the most obvious, as it is the easiest, measure to which Government can resort; but it may often be unjust in itself and dangerous in its results. It falls alike on the innocent and on the guilty. It fills the country with the materials of which rebellions are made, or sends hundreds of our best fighting-men, with all the lessons we have taught them, into the enemy's ranks. To be effective, it should follow closely on the commission of the crime which it is intended to punish; but it can rarely be accomplished with this essential promptitude, for it is only under certain favouring circumstances that an order to reduce to penury and disgrace a thousand trained soldiers can be carried out with safety to the State. To delay the execution of the punishment is outwardly to condone the offence. It was not strange, therefore, that when the 34th Infantry and the 7th Cavalry of Bengal mutinied on the frontier, almost in the presence of the Sikh Army, there should have been obstinate questionings at Head-Quarters as to the expediency of disbandment on the spot, or at some safer place remote from the scene of their crimes. It was the opinion of Lord Ellenborough, at the time, that a regiment of Europeans and a troop of European artillery should have been summoned with all haste from Lodiáná to Fírúzpúr, and that, in presence of this force, the mutinous corps should have been at once disbanded. But a reference, it has been said, was made to Government, and the mutinous regiments were marched down, unsentenced, to Lodiáná and Mírath, there to await the decision of supreme authority. The orders given left some discretion with the Commander-in-Chief. The 7th Cavalry had not mutinied in a body. The native officers and nearly two hundred troopers were true to their Salt. Discipline might, therefore, be vindicated by ordinary processes of law without involving the innocent and the guilty alike in one common ruin. But the 34th, Native officers and Sipáhis, were all tainted; so, with every mark of infamy, in the presence of all the troops, Euro-

Penal Measures.

pean and Native, at Míráth, the regiment was broken up, the British uniform was stripped from the backs of the mutineers, and the number of the regiment was erased from the Army List.*

Propinquity to an overawing European force removes the chief difficulties which oppose themselves to the sudden dissolution of a Native regiment. But under no other circumstances is it to be counselled. The question of disbandment, therefore, perplexed the Madras authorities even more than those of Bengal. To march a regiment, with arms in its hands, some hundreds of miles across the country, to receive its services, and perhaps to witness its repentance during a period of many weeks, all that time concealing the fate that is in store for it, and then, having caged it in a safe place, pinioned it, as it were, beyond all hope of resistance, to visit it with all the terrors of a long-hidden, long-delayed retribution, is altogether abhorrent to the generous nature of an English officer. To have disbanded, for example, the 6th Madras Cavalry at Jabalpúr would have been cruel and dangerous. To have marched it to Arkát in ignorance of its fate, would have been cruel and dastardly. To have broken it up at Kámpatí would have been to incur, only in a less degree, the evil of both courses. And nothing else appeared possible; for it was not to be supposed that all those indignant Muhammadans, men with whom revenge is a virtue, would have quietly gone down, mounted on good horses, and with sharpened sabres at their sides, in full knowledge of their destiny, to the disgraceful punishment awaiting them. With these considerations before them, it was not strange the Madras authorities hesitated to carry out the comprehensive penalty of disbandment, and that, as a choice of difficulties, it should have suffered many guilty men to escape.

In this instance, Lord Ellenborough was eager for disbandment. He said that the conduct of the regiment had been equally bad in itself and pernicious in its results, for that the disturbed state of Bundelkhand rendered it little short of mutiny before the enemy, and it had disconcerted all the

* Two or three years afterwards the gap was filled up by the raising of a new regiment, in no degree better than the old. [It was a rose-water measure which inflicted but little real punishment, and failed entirely to stop the plague.—G. B. M.]

arrangements of his Government for the general defence of the country. But it was not his, either on principle or in practice, to deal harshly with the errors and delusions of the Native Army, and there were few men living who had a more kindly appreciation of the good qualities of the Sipáhi, or who could more readily sympathise with him. If he did not know precisely how to deal with a mutiny of that Army; if he could not, with accurate calculation of the results, so apportion the just measures of leniency and severity as in no case to encourage by the one or to exasperate by the other, he only failed where no one had yet succeeded, and need not have blushed to find himself mortal. He often said that a general mutiny of the Native Army was the only real danger with which our empire in India was threatened; and he believed that the surest means of maintaining the fidelity of the Sipáhi was by continually feeding his passion for military glory. In this he was right. But the passion for military glory cannot always be fed without injustice, and the evils of conquest may be greater than its gains. He had much faith, too, in the good effect of stirring addresses, appealing to the imaginations of the soldiery, and in the application of donatives promptly following good service. And, although in working out his theory he was sometimes impelled to practical expressions of it, which caused people to smile, as in the famous Somnát Proclamation, and in the distribution of the "favourite *mihtais*" to the Sipáhis after the battle of Mahárájpúr, there was, doubtless, sound philosophy at the bottom of it. But such light as this only served to show more clearly the many and great difficulties with which the whole question of the Sipáhi Army was beset, and to convince reflecting minds that, though human folly might accelerate the break-down of the whole system, human wisdom could not so fence it around with safeguards as to give it permanent vitality and strength.

Sweetmeats.

That the treatment to which the mutinies arising out of the annexation of Sindh were subjected by the Government of the day was nothing more than a series of expedients is a fact, but one which may be recorded without censure. The disbandment of one regiment, the punishment of a few ringleaders in others, the forgiveness of the rest; the dismissal of an officer or two for culpable mismanagement, and a liberal issue of donatives to all who during the preceding year had either done well, or suffered much, in the service of the State, were so many palliatives,

born of the moment, which did not touch the seat of the disease, or contribute to the future healthy action of the system. But there were circumstances, both intrinsic and extrinsic, which seemed to forbid, on grounds alike of justice and of policy, the application of more vigorous remedies. The fact, indeed, that the misconduct of the soldiery had, in a great measure, been the direct growth of the injuries which they had sustained at the hands of the Government, would have made severity a crime. But it was no less certain that leniency was a blunder. If an Army once finds that it can dictate to Government the amount of its pay, there is an end to the controlling power of the latter. What the State ought to have learnt from this lesson was the paramount obligation which rested upon it of clearly explaining to its troops all regulations affecting their pay and allowances, and especially such as entailed upon them any loss of privileges antecedently enjoyed. Under any circumstances a reduction of pay is a delicate and hazardous operation. Even the loyalty of European officers is not always proof against such a trial. But the absence of explanation aggravates it, in the Sipáhi's eyes, into a breach of faith; he believes that he is only asserting his rights when he strikes for the restoration of that of which he has been, in his own eyes unjustly, deprived; and the Government then, perplexed in the extreme, has only a choice of evils before it, and either on the side of leniency or severity is too likely to go lamentably wrong.

CHAPTER IV.

It was fortunate, perhaps, for the rulers of that day that Peace was but of short duration, and that the "passion for military glory" had again something to feed upon. The Sikh Army, having risen against its own leaders, was vapouring on the banks of the Satlaj, and threatening to cross the British frontier. No war could have been more welcome to the Sipáhi than a war with the Sikhs. For they were an insolent and minacious race, and it was known that they had talked of overrunning Hindustan, and pouring on to the sack of Delhi and the pillage of Calcutta. They took the first step, and the war commenced.

The Patná Conspiracy.

Whilst the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief were at the head of the Army on the frontier, and all eyes were turned towards the scene of that sanguinary conflict on the Satlaj, lower down, on the banks of the Ganges, four hundred miles from Calcutta, an incident was occurring, which, in quiet times, might have made itself heard all over the country, but which, lost in the din of battle in that momentous winter, gave only a local sound. Discovery was made of an organised attempt to corrupt the soldiery in the Lower Provinces. On Christmas-eve the Magistrate of Patná received a letter from Major Rowcroft, informing him that the Munshí of his regiment—the 1st N.I.—was in treasonable correspondence with a rich and influential landowner in the neighbourhood, who had been tampering with the allegiance of the Native officers and Sipáhis in the contiguous station of Dánápúr.

Of the truth of the story there was no doubt. To what dimensions the conspiracy really extended, and from what central point it radiated, is not known, and now never will be known. It was a season of considerable popular excitement, aggravated in the neighbourhood of Patná by local causes, and eager efforts had been made to prepare the people for revolt.

Reports had been for some time current to the effect that the British Government purposed to destroy the caste of the Hindus, and to abolish Muhammadanism by forbidding the initial ceremony through which admission is obtained to the number of the Faithful. And to this was added another lie, scarcely less alarming, that the Pardah was also to be prohibited, and that Muhammadan females of all ranks were to be compelled to go about unveiled. Stories of this kind, it has been observed, however monstrous in themselves, are readily believed, if there be but only a very little truth to give them currency. The truth may be from within or it may be from without. It may be direct proof or indirect confirmation. It little matters so long as there is something which men may see and judge for themselves. There had been many exciting causes at this time. to rouse the resentments and to stimulate the activities of the Maulvis and the Pandits, such as the new law of inheritance and the new educational measures; and now the introduction of the messing system in the gaols was a patent fact which all might understand. It was an incident, moreover, of untoward occurrence, that about this time, when designing men were eagerly looking out for some false move on the part of the Government, the Magistrate of Patná, at the request of the Principal of the College, alarmed the inhabitants of the city by instituting inquiries enabling him to form something of a census of the population, showing their different castes, professions, and employments—a movement which was at once declared to be a part of the great scheme of the Government for the forcible conversion of the people.

But it was necessary that the soldiery should be gained over by some alarming fiction of especial application to the Sipáhi himself. Already had indirect agency been set at work for his corruption. He found the lie in full leaf in his native village. When he went on furlough, his relatives told him that if he did not make a stand for his religion he would soon have to fight against his brethren and kinsmen.* When he returned to his regiment he found that every one was talking on the same subject, and that it was currently believed that the introduction of the messing system into the gaols was to be followed by its

* Some of the men of the 1st Regiment told Major Rowcroft that the villagers had said, "Our village furnishes 500 men to your Army; but if you will not listen to us, we will send 2000 jawáns (young men) to oppose you."

introduction into the Army, and that the Sipáhi was not much longer to be allowed to have uncontrolled dominion over his own cooking-pot.

If, then, there had been nothing more than this, the time would have been propitious, and plotters might reasonably have thought that the opportunity was ripe. But in that winter of 1845–46 a seditious enterprise of this kind in the Lower Provinces was favoured by the circumstances of the great war with the Sikhs, which was drawing all the resources of the Government to the North-Western frontier. There was a vague belief that lakhs of Panjábi fighting-men would soon be streaming over the country, and that the English would be driven into the sea. Many, then, with eager cupidity, bethought themselves of gutting the opium godowns of Patná, where a million and a half of Government property lay stored; and all the dangerous classes of the city were ripe and ready for pillage and for slaughter. A rising of the Sipáhis at such a time, or their acquiescence in a rising of the people, might have been fatal to the continued supremacy of Government in that part of the country. The plotters scarcely hoped to accomplish more than the latter of these two means of overthrowing the English. At all events, it was safer to begin with the milder experiment on the fidelity of the Sipáhi. So delegates went about in the Lines saying that the great King of Dehli had sent a confidential agent to give a month's pay to every Native officer and soldier in the regiments in order that if any outbreak should occur in their part of the country they should not lift a hand in support of the Government. All the landowners, and the cultivators, and the townspeople were ready, it was said, to rise; and if the soldiery would only remain inactive, the British power might be destroyed before it could perpetrate the outrages by which it sought to overturn the religions of the country.

A Jamadar of the 1st Regiment heard this story, gravely listened to all that was urged by the emissary of sedition, and said that he would consider of the matter.* Then he repeated all that had happened to his commanding officer, and measures were soon taken to test the reality of the plot. There was at all events one substantial proof that the story was no fiction.

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* The Jamadar was a Brahman, by name Moti-Misr. He had been pay-havildar to Rowcroft, when the latter was adjutant of the regiment, and was greatly attached to him.

There was money counted out for the work of corruption, and tied up in bags ready for immediate delivery. It was agreed that the Jamadar and another officer in Rowcroft's confidence should take the money, and matters were soon conveniently arranged so as to bring about the disclosure. A detachment of the regiment was about to proceed to Gayá; with this went the two faithful Jamadars. On the way they met or were overtaken by two well-dressed Muhammadans in an ekka, or native wheeled-carriage, who gave them the money, saying that others had taken it, and that larger supplies were forthcoming for the same purpose. Nothing could stamp the reality of the design more surely than this. Men are in earnest when they part with their money.

Another Native officer of the 1st traitorously took the corrupting coin, and a Munshí of the regiment was found to be deeply implicated in the plot. But Rowcroft's opportune discovery of the attempt to debauch his men, and the measures which he wisely adopted, rendered the further efforts of the conspirators utterly futile and hopeless. The military offenders were soon in confinement; the civil magistrate was tracking down the instigators of sedition; and if no great success then attended the attempt to bring the necks of the most guilty to the gallows, it was sufficient for the public peace that the plot was discovered. What the amount of real danger then was it is difficult to determine. Two other Native regiments at Dánápúr were tampered with in like manner, but the discovery of the plot in Rowcroft's corps rendered other efforts abortive. Many great names were used by the agents of sedition, but upon what authority can only be conjectured. It was stated that a royal mandate had come from the King of Dehli; that the Rájah of Nipál was ready to send a great army sweeping down to the plains; and again it was said that the Sikhs were the prime movers of the plot.* All this can be only obscurely shadowed on the page of history. But it is

* The principal actor in the Patná conspiracy was one Khojah Hasan Ali Khan. It seems that at the Sónpur Fair, a short time before, he had appeared in great state, and received a considerable number of influential people in his tent, with the object of instilling into them a fear of religious conversion, and encouraging their determination to resist. He escaped for want of evidence. There was also a wandering bookseller, who, on the plea of selling Persian volumes to the Munshís of regiments, readily gained access to them without exciting suspicion.

certain that a scroll was found, described by a witness as being many cubits long, on which the names of some hundred of respectable inhabitants of Patná, Hindus and Muhammadans, were attached to a solemn declaration binding them to die in defence of their religion, and that it was honestly believed by large numbers of the educated no less than the ignorant people of that part of the country, that the one cherished object of the British Government was to reduce all the people of India to the no-caste state of the Faringhis. Of the reality of this belief there is no doubt; so a Proclamation was put forth by the Governor of Bengal, declaring that as the British Government never had interfered, so the people might be assured that it never would interfere in any way with the religions of the country.

The Jamadar and the Munshí of the 1st Regiment, who had been seduced into traitorous courses, were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to death, with the usual reluctance manifested by a tribunal composed only of Native officers.* But it was not necessary to strike terror into the minds of an army hovering on the brink of general mutiny; so the sentence was not carried out. Whatever danger there may have been had passed away.† The victories of Hardinge and Gough had a grand moral effect from one end of the country to the other, for it had been believed that the British were sore pressed, and that their power would be shaken to the centre by this collision with the Sikhs. Victory made all things right again, and for a while we heard nothing more of mutiny or sedition. With intervals of comparative repose, distinguished by an occupation of the Sikh country, very flattering to the Sipáhi's pride, and very profitable to his purse, the operations which resulted in the fall of the

* Not long after the discovery of this plot, Major Rowcroft was seized with severe illness, not without suspicion of poison, and obliged to proceed to England. Jamadar Moti-Misr told him that on his return to India, he would, doubtless, be able to lay before the Major further facts illustrative of the extent of the conspiracy. But when Rowcroft rejoined the regiment both Moti-Misr and the other faithful Jamadar were dead.

† It is stated in an interesting pamphlet, published by Mr. Stocqueler, in 1857, that it was said at Danápúr, after the discovery of this conspiracy, that although the English had then escaped, there would be, in 1857, when they had ruled a hundred years, such a *tomásha* as the country had never seen. I can find no trace of this in any contemporary documents, nor have my inquiries from officers who were then at Dánápúr enabled me to confirm the truth of the story.

Sikh empire then lasted for more than three years. The story has been told in the first chapter of this work. The Panjáb, like Sindh, was turned by a stroke of the pen into a British province, and the same difficulties bristled up in the path of the Annexer. The Sipáhi, called to serve in the Panjáb, had no longer the privileges of foreign service; and, in spite of the lesson taught by the Sindh annexation, he could not understand why the conquest of the country should be inaugurated by the reduction of his pay.

And so the regiments in the Panjáb at that time, and those which were moved across the Satláj from our older provinces, determined to refuse the reduced rates, and to stand out boldly for the higher allowances. All the regiments, suffering or soon to suffer from the incidence of the reduction, took counsel with each other, and promised mutual support. Delegates from the several corps went about from station to station, and letters were exchanged between those at a distance. The first manifestation of open discontent was at Ráwalpindí. There, one morning in July, Sir Colin Campbell, a soldier of the highest promise, already budding into fame—the "war-bred Sir Colin," as Napier then called him—received the significant intelligence that the 22nd Regiment had refused to receive their pay. Outwardly, the Sipáhis were calm and respectful; but their calmness indicated a sense of strength, and Campbell felt that all the other Native regiments in the Panjáb would probably follow their example. Such a combination at any time and in any place would have been dangerous and alarming; but the peril was greatly aggravated by the peculiar circumstances of the times. For it had grown up in a newly-conquered country, swarming with the disbanded fighting-men of the old Sikh Army, and it was believed that our discontented Sipáhis, if they had once broken into rebellion, would have soon found their ranks swollen by recruits from the Khálsá soldiery, eager to profit by the crisis, and again to strike for the recovery of their lost dominion. We had just seen the downfall of an empire precipitated by the lawlessness of an army, driven onward by the impulses of its greed; and now it seemed as though our own soldiery, having caught the contagion, were clamouring for donatives, and that it required very careful steering to save us from being wrecked upon the same rock.

1849-50. Mutiny in the Panjáb.

July, 1849.

Sir Charles Napier had, at that time, just appeared upon the

stage. He had hastened from Calcutta to Simla to meet the Governor-General, who was refreshing himself with the cool mountain air; and there the news reached him, not that one, but that two regiments at Ráwalpindí had refused to take their pay, and that there was every prospect of four more regiments at Wazírábád, and two at the intermediate station of Jhilam, following their example. Then Dalhousie and Napier took counsel together, with some of their staff-officers, and it was debated whether it would not be wise to strike a vigorous blow at the incipient mutiny by disbanding the regiments which had already refused to accept their pay. To this course, proposed by Colonel Benson, an old officer of the Company's service, held in deserved regard by many successive Governors-General, Napier resolutely objected, and Dalhousie concurred with the Chief. Hoping for the best, but still prepared for the worst, the old soldier instructed Campbell to point out to the recusant regiments the folly and wickedness of their course; but he wrote privately to him that in the event of their obduracy, he and other commanding officers must bring the power of the European regiments in the Panjáb to bear upon the coercion of the mutinous Sipáhis. But before these letters arrived, Campbell had tided over the difficulty. "The combination amongst the men of the 13th and 22nd Regiments," he wrote to Napier, on the 26th of July, "gave way to fear on the 18th, the day before your prescription for bringing them to their senses was despatched from Simla." The fact is that, at that time, they were not ready; they were not strong enough for the resistance of authority; and they were not prepared to be the protomartyrs in such a cause. There was a European regiment at Ráwalpindí; there were European regiments at other stations not far removed; and so it was held to be a wiser course to wait until the new regiments should arrive from the older provinces and unite with them in the dangerous work of military rebellion.

That these regiments were prepared to resist was soon too apparent. From Simla, Napier proceeded on a tour of inspection to the principal military stations in the Northern Provinces of India; and at Delhi he found unmistakable signs of a confederation of many regiments determined not to serve in the Panjáb except on the higher pay. One regiment there, warned for service beyond the Satláj, declared its intention not to march; but it was conciliated by a liberal grant of furloughs, which had before been withheld; and it went on to its destination.

Napier believed that the spirit of disaffection was wide-spread. He had heard ominous reports of twenty-four regiments prepared to strike, and when he entered the Panjáb, he was not surprised to find that mutiny was there only in a state of suspended activity, and that at any moment it might burst out, all the more furiously for this temporary suppression.

At Wazirábád it soon openly manifested itself. In command of that station was one of the best soldiers of the Company's service. At an early age John Hearsey had earned a name in History, as one of the heroes of Sitábaldí, and thirty years of subsequent service had thoroughly ripened his experience, so that at this time he had perhaps as large a knowledge of the Sipáhi, of his temper, of his habits, of his language, as any officer in the Native Army. With this large knowledge dwelt also in him a large sympathy. It commonly happened in those days that the man who best knew the Sipáhi best loved him; and Hearsey, who had seen how good a soldier he could be before the enemy, respected his good qualities, and looked leniently on his bad. He believed that, with good management, a Sipáhi regiment might be kept, under almost any circumstances, in the right temper, and he had great faith in the magic efficacy of a good speech. When, therefore, one of the regiments at Wazirábád openly refused its pay, Hearsey drew up the men on parade, and addressed them in language so touching, so forcible, and so much to the point, that many hung down their heads, ashamed of what they had done, and some even shed tears of penitence. The pay was then offered to them again. The first four men who refused were tried at once, and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour. The whole brigade was then turned out to see the sentence carried into effect. There were four Native regiments at Wazirábád; but there was also a Regiment of the Line and detachments of European Artillery, Horse and Foot. In the presence of this force, the convicted Sipáhis were manacled as felons and sent off to work on the roads. After this, there were no more refusals; the men took their pay and did their work.

But discipline had not yet been fully vindicated. Three ringleaders, who had been known to go from company to company, instigating and fomenting rebellion, were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment. But Napier, who regarded in a far stronger light both the enormity of the offence and the magnitude of the danger, ordered a

revision of the sentence, and death was recorded against the culprits; and against two others who were tried for the same offence by the same Court.* Then justice was satisfied, and mercy might stretch forth its hand. The sentence was commuted to transportation for life. "In eternal exile," said Napier, in his general order to the troops, "they will expiate their crimes. For ever separated from their country and their relations, in a strange land beyond the seas, they will linger out their miserable lives. It is a change, but I do not consider it an amelioration of their punishment. They will remain living examples of the miserable fate which awaits traitors to their colours."

January 25, 1850.

But the spirit of disaffection was not suppressed, though locally for a time it was subdued. It was declared that the Post-office runners laboured under the weight of the Sipáhis' letters, which were then passing from cantonment to cantonment; but a large number of these letters were seized and examined, and they were found to contain nothing on the subject of the allowances.† Napier, however, anticipated a crisis, and was prepared for it. Taking post at Pesháwar, the extremest corner of our new Panjáb territory, where was a strong European force, he believed that he would ere long be compelled to sweep down with the English regiments, picking up reinforcements as he went from station to station, and to crush a general rising of the Sipáhi troops. And soon it appeared to him that the crisis had come. The 66th Regiment broke into mutiny at Govindgarh. Bursting out, on parade, with vehement shouts of disapprobation, they attempted to seize the gates of the Fort, so as to cut off all communication with the loyal troops outside the walls. There was no European regiment at Govindgarh, but the 1st Native Cavalry, under Bradford, were faithful among the faithless, and, aided by the cool courage of Macdonald of the 66th, they made good their entrance through the gate.‡ The Fort was saved. The European

* Sir Charles Napier, in his Indian Misgovernment, says that four were tried at first, and one afterwards; but the fact is as stated in the text.

† Sir Henry Lawrence, in *Calcutta Review*, vol. xxii. The statement is made on the authority of Major W. Mayne, President of the Govindgarh Court of Enquiry.

‡ An opportune blow from Macdonald's sword appears to have caused the gate to be opened. See statement published by Sir H. Lawrence in *Calcutta Review*, vol. xxii.

officers were saved. And the guilty regiment was doomed to a moral death. The 66th was struck out of the Army List. The men were disbanded in a body, and their colours given to a corps of Gurkhas, from the hill-tracts of Nipál, who were known to be good soldiers, with no Brahmanical daintiness about them, and a general fidelity to their Salt.

"When the 66th was disbanded," says Sir Charles Napier, "the mutiny ceased entirely. Why? The Brahmans saw that the Gurkhas, another race, could be brought into the ranks of the Company's Army—a race dreaded, as more warlike than their own. Their religious combination was by that one stroke rendered abortive." But, far other causes than this helped to subdue the spirit of disaffection which was then ripening in the Panjáb. The Sipáhis had struck for higher allowances than those which had been granted to them by the strict letter of the Regulations; but Napier thought, that however unsoldierly, however culpable their conduct might be, some grounds of dissatisfaction existed. The change, which the Sipáhis resented, was declared by the Chief to be "impolitic and unjust"; and, pending a reference to Government, orders were issued for the payment of compensation to the troops, on a higher scale than that sanctioned by the latest regulations.*

* The bare statement in the text will suffice for the general reader, but not, perhaps, for the professional one. It may be stated, therefore, that it had been for many years the rule of the Indian Government, whenever the prices of the common articles of consumption used by the Native soldiery exceeded a certain fixed price, to grant them compensation proportionate to the additional cost of supplies. This bounty seems first to have been bestowed in the year 1821 on the Native troops serving in the Western Provinces, and was limited to the single article of áttah, or flour. Whenever áttah was selling at less than fifteen sírs (or thirty pounds) the rupee, a proportionate compensation was granted. But, subsequently, in 1844, the application of this order was extended by Lord Ellenborough, and compensation also was granted to the Native troops serving in Sindh, when certain minor articles of consumption were selling at a high price. In the following year a new order relative to this same subject of compensation-money was issued by Lord Hardinge, who had by this time succeeded to the government. Instead of granting a separate money-compensation for each particular high-priced article of consumption, all the several articles were massed, and some being cheaper than elsewhere, a general average was struck. It was then officially announced that thenceforth compensation would be granted to the Sipáhis "whenever the price of provisions, forming the Native soldier's diet, should exceed 3 rupees and 8 annas, the aggregate of the rates for the several articles laid down in the General Orders of the 26th of February, 1844." Whenever, in other words, the Sipáhi was unable to obtain his daily rations at a cost of

Dalhousie and Napier.

Then arose that memorable conflict between Napier and Dalhousie, which ended in the resignation by the former of an office which many had predicted that he could not long continue to hold. Both were men of imperious temper, and a collision between them was, from the first, clearly foreseen. When the Military Chief took upon himself to readjust the allowances of the troops in the Panjáb, the Civil Governor was at sea beyond the reach of an official reference. He returned to find what had been done, and he resented such an encroachment upon the prerogative of the Government. Napier had justified the exercise of an authority not constitutionally belonging to his office, by the assertion that the danger was pressing, and that action, in such an emergency, did not admit delay. Dalhousie denied the premises; he insisted that there had been no danger. "I cannot sufficiently express," he wrote, in an elaborate Minute on Napier's proceedings, "the astonishment with which I read, on the 26th of May, the intimation then made to the Government by the Commander-in-Chief, that in the month of January last a mutinous spirit pervaded the army in the Panjáb, and that insubordination had risen so high and spread so wide, as to impress his Excellency with the belief that the Government of the country was placed at that time in a position of 'great peril.' I have carefully weighed the statements which his Excellency has advanced. I have examined anew the records that bear on the state of public affairs at that period, and I have well reflected upon all that has passed. While I do not seek to question in any way the sincerity of the convictions by which Sir Charles Napier has been led to declare that the army was in mutiny and the empire in danger, I, on my part, am bound to say that my examination and reflection have not lessened in any degree the incredulity with which I first read the statements to which I have referred." "There is no justification," continued his Lordship, "for the cry that India was in danger. Free from all threat of hostilities from without,

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3 rupees 8 annas a month (which cost was calculated in accordance with the aggregate fixed rates of the prices of provisions, beyond which compensation, under the old regulations, was granted for each article), the excess was to be defrayed by the Government. The regulation of 1845 was not so favourable to the troops as that of 1844, and Sir Charles Napier, believing that the application of the former rule to the troops in the Panjáb was a mistake, directed the regulation of 1844 again to be brought into force.

and secure, through the submission of its new subjects, from insurrection within, the safety of India has never for one moment been imperilled by the partial insubordination in the ranks of its army. I have confronted the assertions of the Commander-in-Chief on this head with undisputed facts, and with the authority of recorded documents, and my convictions strengthened by the information which the Government commands, I desire to record my entire dissent from the statement that the army has been in mutiny, and the empire in danger."

This was, doubtless, the popular view of the matter; and it was readily accepted at the time. What amount of danger really existed was never known, and now never will be known. Whatever it may have been, it was tided over; and the quietude that followed this temporary explosion seemed to warrant the confidence which the Governor-General had expressed. But Napier held to his opinion with as much tenacity as Dalhousie. Nothing could shake the belief of the old soldier that the exceptional course he had adopted was justified by the exceptional circumstances of the times. Still he knew the duty of obedience; he knew that in a conflict between two authorities the lower must yield to the higher, and that he had no right to complain if the latter asserted the power vested in him by the Law. "And I do not complain," he emphatically added. But strong in his conviction of right, and master of himself, though not of the situation, he felt that he could retire with dignity from a position which he could not hold with profit to the State. And he did retire. On the 22nd of May, he addressed a letter to the Horse-Guards, requesting that the Duke of Wellington would obtain her gracious Majesty's permission for him to resign the chief command of the Indian Army. "And the more so," he added, "as being now nearly seventy years of age—during the last ten years of which I have gone through considerable fatigue of body and mind, especially during the last year—my health requires that relief from climate and business which public service in India does not admit."

But there is no blame, in such a case, to be recorded against the Governor-General. When an old and distinguished soldier —a warrior of high repute, and a man of consummate ability— deliberately declares that he regards the system under which he has been called upon to command an army as a system at

once faulty and dangerous; that he conceives the power of the civil magistrate to be so absolute that the arm of the chief soldier is paralysed; and that, so enervated and emasculated by restrictions imposed upon him by law, he cannot wield the sword with honour to himself or advantage to the State, and that, therefore, he desires to lay it down, he utters words which, whether he be right or wrong in his estimate of what ought to be the just balance between the civil and the military power, are honest, manly, dignified words, and ought everywhere to be received with respect. Few men had a better right than Sir Charles Napier to criticise an Act of Parliament. He had a right to think that the law was a bad law; and he had a right to say that it was bad. But the law, whether good or bad, was not made by Lord Dalhousie, but by the British Parliament. It was Dalhousie's business to administer that law, and to maintain the authority vested in him by the Imperial Legislature. Of this Napier had no right to complain, and he declared that he did not complain. But the contest was on every account an unseemly and an unfortunate one. It was another and a culminating instance of that excessive centralisation which weakened the authority and degraded the character of the military arm, and taught the soldiery that the greatest chief whom England could send them was as much a subaltern of the civil governor as the youngest ensign on the Army List.

And it taught even more than this. It taught thinking men, not for the first time, that even the chief members of the Government were at war among themselves, and the lesson shook their faith in the stability of a power thus disunited, thus incoherent. "I am now sixty years of age," wrote an intelligent native official to Sir George Clerk. "I have heard three sayings repeated by wise men, and I myself have also found out, from my own experience, that the sovereignty of the British Government will not be overthrown save by the occurrence of three objectionable circumstances." And the first of these circumstances he thus stated: "Formerly the high, dignified Sáhibs had no enmity among themselves, or at least the people of India never came to know that they had enmity. Now enmity exists among them, and it is as well seen as the sun at noonday that they calumniate and bear malice against each other." * Such conflicts of authority are keenly watched and

* MS. Correspondence, translated from the Persian.

volubly discussed; and a significance is attached to them out of all proportion to the importance with which amongst us like contentions are invested. The natives of India know that we are few; but they feel that union makes us many. Seen to be at discord among ourselves, we shrivel into our true proportions, and it is believed that our power is beginning to crumble and decay.

During the administration of Lord Ellenborough there had been disunion among the higher authorities, arising out of nearly similar causes. The unauthorised promises given by the Commander-in-Chief to the Native troops proceeding to Sindh had stirred the resentment of the Governor-General, and his grave displeasure was excited by the zealous indiscretions of the Madras Government. But he had studiously veiled from the public eye the differences that had arisen. There was nothing to which he was more keenly alive than to the necessity, especially in troubled times, of maintaining a show of union and co-operation in the high places of Government. It was his hard fate at last to be compelled, by the fiat of a higher power, to exhibit to the people of India, in his own person, the very spectacle which he had striven to conceal from them, and to declare, trumpet-tongued, that the English were vehemently contending among themselves. But so long as he exercised the supreme control he was careful not to reveal the local dissensions of the Government, lest he should weaken the authority it was so essential to uphold; and little even is now known of the strife that raged at the time, when the great difficulty of garrisoning Sindh was filling the minds of the rulers of the land. But the strife between Dalhousie and Napier was proclaimed, almost as it were by beat of drum, in all the Lines and Bazaars of the country; and all men knew that the English, who used so to cling to one another, that it seemed that they thought with one strong brain and struck with one strong arm, were now wasting their vigour by warring among themselves, and in their disunion ceasing to be formidable.

This was apparent to all men's eyes; but the Sipáhi had his own particular lesson to learn, and did not neglect it. How it happened that the bitter experience which the English Government had gained, on the annexation of Sindh, made no impression upon the minds of those whose duty it was to provide against the recurrence of similar disasters, it is

impossible to explain. All we know is, that five years after a misunderstanding between the Government and the Army with respect to the rates of pay and allowance to be disbursed to the Sipáhi, in a newly-acquired country, had driven into mutiny a large number of Native regiments, and greatly perplexed the rulers of the day, a similar conjuncture arose, and there was a similar misunderstanding, with similar results.* The Sipáhi had not learnt to reconcile himself to the British theory of Annexation, and so he resented it in the Panjáb as he had before resented it in Sindh. In the latter country the excitement was far greater, and the danger more serious, than in the former; but in both there was an outburst on the one side, and a concession on the other. That was given to the mutinous soldier, not without loss of character by Government, which might before have been given to the loyal one with befitting dignity and grace. When the emergency arises, it is hard to say whether there be greater evil in concession or in resistance. Napier thought the one thing, Dalhousie thought the other; and each had strong argument on his side. But both must have bitterly regretted that the contingency was ever suffered to arise, that no one in authority, warned by the lessons of the Past, had learnt to look at the consequences of Annexation with a Sipáhi's eyes, and anticipated, by small concessions, the not irrational expectations which, at a later stage developing into demands, had all the force and significance of mutiny. Had this been done; had the Sipáhi been

* This uncertainty with respect to the pay and allowances of different branches and different ranks of the Indian Army was emphatically commented upon by Sir Henry Lawrence in an article bearing his name in the *Calcutta Review:* "Of all the wants of the Army, perhaps the greatest want is a simple pay-code, unmistakably showing the pay of every rank, in each branch, under all circumstances. At present there are not three officers in the Bengal Army who could, with certainty, tell what they and the people under them are entitled to in every position in which they are liable to be placed. The Audit-office seldom affords help. It is considered an enemy ready to take advantage of difficulties, not an umpire between man and man. During the last thirty years I have seen much hardship on officers in matters of accounts, and of the several instances of discontent that I have witnessed in the Native Army, all were more or less connected with pay, and in almost every instance the men only asked for what they were by existing rules entitled to. Half a sheet of paper ought to show every soldier his rate of pay, by sea, by land, on leave, on the staff, in hospital, on duty, &c. There ought to be no doubt on the matter. At present there is great doubt, though there are volumes of Pay and Audit Regulations."

told that in consideration of increased distance from home, and other circumstances rendering service in Sindh and the Panjáb more irksome to him than in our older provinces, certain especial advantages would be conferred upon him—advantages which might have been bestowed at small cost to the State—he would have received the boon with gratitude, and applauded the justice of his masters; but after he had struck for it, he saw not their justice, but their fear, in the concession, and he hugged the feeling of power, which lessons such as these could not fail to engender.

CHAPTER V.

After this, there was again a season of quiet. The remaining years of Lord Dalhousie's administration passed away without any further military outbreaks to disturb his rooted conviction of the fidelity of the Sipáhi. There were not wanting those who declared that there was an ineradicable taint in the constitution of the Bengal Army, that it was rotten to the very core. But the angry controversies which arose—the solemn warnings on the one side, and the indignant denials on the other—proved nothing more than that among men entitled to speak with authority on the subject there were vast diversities of opinion. Much of this was attributed to class prejudices and professional jealousies. One voice, very loud and very earnest, pealing from the West, sustained for years a continual remonstrance against the laxities of the Bengal system. But Bengal resented the outrage. A genuine man, above all pettiness, John Jacob, was declared to be the exponent only of small Presidential envyings and heart-burnings. The voice of Truth was proclaimed to be the voice of Bombay. And when officers of the Bengal Army wrote, as some did most wisely, of the evil symptoms which were manifesting themselves, and of the dangers which appeared to be looming in the distance, they were denounced as defilers of their own nest, and as feeble-minded alarmists, to whose utterances no heed should be given. There was a general unwillingness to believe in the decay of discipline throughout one of the finest armies of the world; and in the absence of any outward signs of mischief, we willingly consented not to look beneath the surface for the virus of undeveloped disease.

There is nothing that is strange, and little that is blamable in this. The Bengal Sipáhi had evinced signs of a froward, petulant nature, and he had, on several occasions, broken out

after a fashion which, viewed by European military eyes, is criminality of the deepest dye. But these aberrations were merely a few dark spots upon a century of good service. It was not right that rare exceptions of this kind should cancel in our minds all the noble acts of fidelity which were chronicled in the history of our Empire. Nor was it to be forgotten that, in most instances, the criminality of the Sipáhi had been the direct growth of some mismanagement on the part either of the officers whom he followed or the Government which he served. To have looked with suspicion on the Sipáhi, because from time to time some component parts of our Army had done that which the Armies of every Native State had done with their whole accumulated strength, would have been equally unwise and unjust. For although it might be said that the examples which those Natives States afforded ought to have taught us to beware of the destroying power of a lawless soldiery, the English were justified in believing that there were special reasons why their own mercenaries should not tread in the footsteps of the Maráthá and Sikh Armies. They did not believe in the love of the Sipáhi; but they believed in his fidelity to his Pay.

Character of the Sipáhi.

Whilst it was natural, and indeed commendable, that the remembrance of all the good service which the Native soldiery had done for their English masters, should have sustained our confidence in them as a body, there was nothing in the individual character of the Sipáhi to subvert it. Even his outbreaks of rebellion had recently partaken more of the naughtiness of the child than of the stern resolution of manhood. He had evinced a disposition, indeed, rather to injure himself than to injure others; and it was not easy for those who knew him to believe that he was capable of any violent and sanguinary excesses. His character was made up of inconsistencies, but the weaker and less dangerous qualities appeared to have the preponderance; and though we knew that they made him a very difficult person to manage, we did not think that they made him a dangerous one. From the time when, in the very infancy of the Sipáhi Army, a Madras soldier cut down Mr. Haliburton, and was immediately put to death by his own comrades, to the day when Colin Mackenzie was well-nigh butchered at Bolárain by troopers of his own brigade, there had been ever and anon some murderous incidents to disfigure the Military History of

our Indian Empire.* But outrages of this kind are common to all armies; and there was no reason to regard them in any other light than that of exceptional aberrations. It was not to be said that the Sipáhi was a ruffian because he had done some ruffianly deeds.

He was, indeed, altogether a paradox. He was made up of inconsistencies and contradictions. In his character, qualities so adverse as to be apparently irreconcilable with each other met together and embraced. He was simple and yet designing; credulous and easily deceived by others, and yet obstinately tenacious of his own inbred convictions; now docile as a child, and now hard and immovable in the stubbornness of his manhood. Abstemious and yet self-indulgent, calm and yet impetuous, gentle and yet cruel, he was indolent even to languor in his daily life, and yet capable of being roused to acts of the most desperate energy. Sometimes sportive, and sometimes sullen, he was easily elevated and easily depressed; but he was for the most part of a cheerful nature, and if you came suddenly upon him in the Lines you were more likely to see him with a broad grin upon his face than with any expression of moroseness or discontent. But light-hearted as was his general temperament, he would sometimes brood over imaginary wrongs, and when a delusion once entered his soul it clung to it with the subtle malevolence of an ineradicable poison.

And this, as we now understand the matter, was the most dangerous feature of his character. For his gentler, more genial qualities sparkled upon the surface and were readily appreciated, whilst all the harsher and more forbidding traits lay dark and disguised, and were not discernible in our ordinary intercourse with him. There was outwardly, indeed, very much to rivet the confidence of the European officer, and very little to disturb it. It is true that if we reasoned about it, it did not seem to be altogether reasonable to expect from the Sipáhi any strong affection for the alien officer who had usurped all the high places of the Army, and who kept him down in the dead level of the dust. But Englishmen never reason about their position in the midst of a community of strangers; they take their popularity for granted, and look for homage as a thing of course. And that

* See Williams's Bengal Army and Mackenzie's Narrative of the Mutiny at Bolárum; compare also section on the Sipáhi Army in Sutherland's Sketches of the Native States of India.

homage was yielded to the British officer, not for his own sake, for the Sipáhi hated his colour and his creed, his unclean ways, and his domineering manners; but because he was an embodiment of Success. It was one of the many inconsistencies of which I have spoken, that though boastful and vainglorious beyond all example, the Native soldier of India inwardly acknowledged that he owed to the English officer the aliment which fed his passion for glory and sustained his military pride. This, indeed, was the link that bound class to class, and resisted the dissolving power of many adverse influences. It was this that moved the Sipáhi to light up the tomb of his old commanding officer; it was this that moved the veteran to salute the picture of the General under whom he had fought. But there was a show also of other and gentler feelings, and there were instances of strong personal attachment, of unsurpassed fidelity and devotion, manifested in acts of charity and love. You might see the Sipáhi of many fights, watchful and tender as a woman, beside the sick-bed of the English officer, or playing with the pale-faced children beneath the verandah of his captain's bungalow. There was not an English gentlewoman in the country who did not feel measureless security in the thought that a guard of Sipáhis watched her house, or who would not have travelled, under such an escort, across the whole length and breadth of the land. What was lurking beneath the fair surface we knew not. We saw only the softer side of the Sipáhi's nature; and there was nothing to make us believe that there was danger in the confidence which we reposed in those outward signs of attachment to our rule.

Defects in the System.

But whilst cherishing this not unreasonable confidence in the general good character of the Sipáhi, the British Government might still have suffered some doubts and misgivings to arise when they looked into the details of the System. They might, it has been urged, have believed in the soundness of the whole, but admitted the defectiveness of parts, and addressed themselves earnestly and deliberately to the details of the great work of Army Reform. Instead of boasting that the condition of the Native soldier left nothing to be desired, Lord Dalhousie, it is said, ought to have looked beneath the surface, to have probed all the vices of the existing system, and to have striven with all his might to eradicate them. Information was not wanting. "Officers of experience" were at all times ready to tell him what it behoved him to do. But in

the multitude of counsellors there was inextricable confusion. As with the whole, so with the parts. The forty years' experience of one greybeard belied the forty years' experience of another. And when the responsible ruler had been almost persuaded to see a blot and to promise to erase it, another adviser came, straightway declared it to be a beauty, and besought him to leave it as it was. Thus distracted by the conflicting judgments of the best military critics, Dalhousie did, as others had done before him; he admitted that if he had then for the first time to construct a Native Army it would in some respects differ from that which he saw before him, the growth not of systems and theories but of circumstances; but that as it had grown up, so on the whole it was better to leave it, as change is sometimes dangerous, and almost always misunderstood.

That, indeed, there was no more difficult question to understand than that of the Sipáhi Army, was a fact which must have been continually forced upon the mind of the Governor-General, by the discordant opinions which were pronounced on points vitally affecting its fidelity and efficiency. Even on the great question of Caste, men differed. Some said it was desirable that Native regiments should be composed mainly of high-caste men; because in such men were combined many of the best qualities, moral and physical, which contribute to the formation of an accomplished soldier. The high-caste man had a bolder spirit, a purer professional pride, a finer frame, and a more military bearing, than his countrymen of lower social rank. Other authorities contended that the Native soldiery should be enlisted indiscriminately, that no account should be taken of Caste distinctions, and that the smaller the proportion of Brahmans and Rajputs in the service the better for the discipline of the Army. Comparisons were drawn between the Bengal and the Bombay Armies. There was a strong and not unnatural prejudice in favour of the Bengal Sipáhi; for he was a fine, noble-looking fellow, and in comparison with his comrades from the Southern and Western Presidencies, was said to be quite a gentleman; but there were those who alleged that he was more a gentleman than a soldier; and it was urged that the normal state of the Bengal Army was Mutiny, because in an Army so constituted caste was ever stronger than discipline; and the social institutions of the Sipáhi domineered over the necessities of the State.

Caste.

It was contended, for this reason, that the Bengal Army required a larger infusion of low-caste men. But it was alleged, on the other hand, that this very mixture of castes tended to destroy the discipline of which it was proposed to make it the preservative; for that military rank was held to be nothing in comparison with Brahmanical Elevation, and that the Sipáhi was often the "master of the officer."* To this it was replied that the presumption of Caste was favoured and fostered by the weakness and indulgence of the officers of the Bengal Army; that, in the armies of Madras and Bombay, Caste had found its level; that it had neither been antagonistic to good service, nor injurious to internal discipline; that high-caste men in those armies did cheerfully what they refused to do in Bengal, and that low-caste native officers met with all the respect from their social superiors due to their superior military rank. It was asserted, indeed, that Brahmanism was arrogant and exacting in Bengal, because it saw that it could play upon the fears of the English officers. To this it was replied, that disregard caste as we might, we could never induce the natives to disregard it. And then again the rejoinder was, that in the other Presidencies we had taught them to disregard it, why, then, might not the same lesson be taught in Bengal? The answer to this was, that men will often do in other countries what they cannot be persuaded to do in their own; that high-caste Hindustánis enlisting into the Bombay or Madras Armies were, to a great extent, cut off from the brotherhood, that they were greatly outnumbered in their several regiments, that it was convenient to conform to the custom of the country, and that what he did in a foreign country amongst strangers was little known at home. In a word, when he took service in the Bombay Army, he did what was done in Bombay; just as among ourselves, men who, fearful of losing caste, would on no account be seen to enter a London hell, think nothing of spending whole days in the gambling-rooms of Homburg or Baden-Baden.

Of a kindred nature was the question hotly discussed, whether it were wiser to compose each regiment of men of the same race,

* "I cannot conceive the possibility of maintaining discipline in a corps where a low-caste non-commissioned officer will, when he meets off duty a Brahman Sipáhi, crouch down to him with his forehead on the ground. I have seen this done. The Sipáhi thus treated is the master of the officer."—*Evidence of Major-General Birch.*

again, men of wisdom and experience neutralised one another's judgments, and from amongst so many conflicting opinions it was impossible to evolve the truth.

Families.

It was a question also much debated whether the fidelity and efficiency of the Sipáhi were best maintained by keeping him apart from his family, or by suffering the wives, the children, and the dependents of the soldier to attach themselves to his regiment, and to follow his fortunes. The former was the system in the Bengal Army; the latter, in the Army of Madras, and partially in that of Bombay. Each system had its advocates; each its special advantages. The Bengal Sipáhi visited his family at stated times, and remitted to them a large part of his pay. If he failed to do this he was a marked man in his regiment; and it was said that the knowledge that if he failed in his duty as a soldier, a report of his misconduct would surely reach his native village, and that his face would be blackened before his kindred, kept him in the strict path of his duty. The presence of the Family led to much inconvenience and embarrassment, and the necessity of moving it from one station to another, when the regiments were relieved, strained the scanty resources of the Sipáhi, and developed grievances out of which mutiny might arise.* It was said, indeed, that there was "hardly a Native regiment in the Bengal Army in which the twenty drummers, who were Christians, and had their families with them, did not cause more trouble to their officers than the whole eight hundred Sipáhis." † On the other hand, it was urged that the presence of the Family afforded the best guarantee for the fidelity and good conduct of the Sipáhi. His children were hostages in our hands; the honour of his women was in our keeping. These were held to be safeguards against mutiny and massacre. It was urged, too, that the system tended more to keep them, as a race, apart from the general mass of their countrymen; that the ties which bound them to the country were thus weakened, and their interests more indissolubly associated with the State. They were less representative men than their brethren of the Bengal Army, and more a part of the machinery of Government. And so each system had its advocates, and each was left to work itself out and develop its own results.

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* See the case of the 6th Madras Cavalry, *ante*, p. 213.

† Sleeman on the Spirit of Discipline in the Native Army.

Promotion.

Great, also, was the difference of opinion with respect to Promotion. Some said that the Bengal Army was destroyed by the Seniority system, which gave to every Sipáhi in the service an equal chance of rising to the rank of a Commissioned Officer.* Others maintained that this was the very sheet-anchor which enabled it to resist all adverse influences. Strong arguments were adduced, and great names were quoted upon both sides. It was said that under such a system there was no incentive to exertion; that the men were independent of their officers, that they had no motive to earn the good opinion of their superiors, that it was enough for them to drowse through a certain number of years of service, to slide quietly into a commission, and then to end their military lives in a state of senile somnolence and apathy. The Native officers of the Bengal Army were, therefore, for the most part, respectable, worn-out, feeble-minded old men, with no influence in their regiments, and no desire beyond that of saving themselves as much trouble as possible, and keeping things as quiet as they could. On the other hand, it was alleged that the seniority system was the very prop and support of the Sipáhi service; that all men were happy and contented, and had some aliment of hope, so long as they felt that nothing but their own misconduct could deprive them of the right of succession to the highest grades of the Native Army. It was said that to pass over a man at the head of the list, and to give promotion to others of shorter service, would be to flood the regiments with desperate malcontents, or else with sullen, broken-spirited idlers. Whilst Henry Lawrence and John Jacob were descanting on the evil of filling the commissioned ranks of the Sipáhi Army with "poor old wretches, feeble in body and imbecile in mind,"† Charles Napier was peremptorily commanding that "the fullest attention and consideration should invariably be given to the claim of seniority in every grade" of the Native Army, and William Sleeman was asserting, not less emphatically, in his published writings, that "though we might have in every regiment a few smarter Native officers, by disregarding the rule of promotion than by adhering to it, we should, in the diminu-

* To every regiment of Native infantry were attached one Subahdár-major, ten Subahdárs, and ten Jamadars.

† *Views and Opinions of General John Jacob.* p. 120; compare also Sir Henry Lawrence's ***Essays, Military and Political,*** p. 24 *et seq.*

tion of good feeling towards the European officers and the Government, lose a thousand times more than we gained."* What wonder, then, that Governor-General after Governor-General was perplexed and bewildered, and left things, when he passed away from the scene, as he found them on his first arrival.

Then, again, there were wide diversities of opinion with respect to the European officering of regiments. There were those who contended for the Irregular and those who were loud in their praises of the Regular system; some who thought it better to attach to each regiment a few select officers, as in the old times, giving them some power and authority over their men; and others who believed it to be wiser to officer the regiments after the later English system, like regiments of the Line, with a large available surplus for purposes of the General Staff, and to leave all the centralised power and authority in the hand of the Adjutant-General of the Army.† There was a continual cry, not always, it must be admitted, of the most unselfish character, for "more officers"; and yet it was plain that the Irregular regiments, to which only three or four picked officers were attached, were in a perfect state of discipline in peace, and capable of performing admirable service in war. It was said that in action the Sipáhis, losing their officers, killed or carried wounded to the rear, lost heart, and were soon panic-

European Officers.

* Sleeman relates, that "an old Subahdar, who had been at the taking of the Isle of France, mentioned that when he was the senior Jamadar of his regiment, and a vacancy had occurred to bring him in as Subahdar, he was sent for by his commanding officer, and told that by orders from Head-Quarters he was to be passed over, on account of his advanced age and supposed infirmity. 'I felt,' said the old man, 'as if I had been struck by lightning, *and fell down dead*. The Colonel was a good man, and had seen much service. He had me taken into the open air, and when I recovered he told me that he would write to the Commander-in-Chief and represent my case. He did so immediately, and I was promoted, and I have since done my duty as Subahdar for ten years.'" But, it may be asked, *how?* It must be borne in mind, too, that Sleeman speaks here of the effect of supercession under a Seniority system. Under a system of selection such results would not be apparent, because there would not be the same disgrace in being passed over.

† A regiment of Native Infantry in March, 1856, was officered by 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 6 captains, 10 lieutenants, and 5 ensigns. A few months afterwards another captain and another lieutenant were added to each regiment.

struck; and that if officers were so few, this contingency must often happen. To this, however, it was replied, that if the Native officers were of the right class, they would keep their men together, and still do good service; but if they were worn-out imbeciles, or over-corpulent and scant of breath, of course disorder and ruin must follow the fall of the English officers. Then, hearing this, the disputant on the other side would triumphantly ask how many years' purchase our empire in India were worth, if our Native officers were as efficient as ourselves. It was often argued, indeed, that our instructions might some day return to plague the inventor; that to make men qualified to lead our battalions to battle against our enemies is to qualify them to command troops to fight against ourselves. But there were others, and chief among them Henry Lawrence, who, taking a larger and more liberal view of the question, contended that it was sound policy to give every man, European and Native, a motive for exertion; who declared that it was one of the crying wants of our system that it afforded no outlet for the energies of Native soldiers of superior courage and ability, and urged that we could not expect to have an efficient Native Army so long as we rigidly maintained in it the theory of the Dead Level, and purposely excluded every possible inducement to superior exertion.

Nor less curious were the fundamental diversities of opinion which manifested themselves, when thinking men began to consider whether the English in India carried into their daily lives too much or two little of their nationality. It was asserted on the one side, that the English officer was too stiff-necked and exclusive, that he dwelt apart too much, and subdued himself too little to surrounding influence; and on the other side, that he fell too rapidly into Oriental habits, and soon ceased to be, what it should have been his ambition to remain to the last, a model of an English Gentleman. It was urged by some that increased facilities of intercourse with Europe rendered men more dissatisfied with the ordinary environments of Eastern life and professional duty, whilst others declared that one of the most serious defects in the Indian Military System was the difficulty with which the English officer obtained furlough to Europe.* The stringency of the Furlough Regulations had, however, been greatly relaxed during the administration of Lord

* *Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General John Jacob.*

Dalhousie, and the establishment of regular steam-communication between the two countries had made the new rules practical realities. But whatsoever increased intercourse with Europe may have done to promote the application of Western science to our Indian Military System, it did not improve the regimental officer. It was contended that he commonly returned to his duty with increased distaste for cantonment life; and that he obeyed the mandate, "Let it be the fashion to be English," by suffering a still greater estrangement to grow up between him and the Native soldier.

Indeed, there was scarcely a single point, in the whole wide range of topics connected with the great subject of the efficiency of the Native Indian Army, which did not raise a doubt and suggest a controversy. And there was so much of demonstrable truth in the assertions, and so much cogency in the arguments adduced, on both sides, that in the eyes of the looker-on it was commonly a drawn battle between the two contending parties; and so, as it was the easier and perhaps the safer course to leave things as they were, the changes which Army Reformers so earnestly advocated were practically rejected, and we clung to evils which had grown up in the system rather than we would incur the risk of instituting others of our own.

Intermixture of European Troops.

But perplexing as were these practical details, there was nothing so difficult of solution as the great doubt which arose as to the amount of confidence in the Sipáhi Army which it was expedient outwardly to manifest. It was said, upon the one hand, that any diminution of our confidence would be fatal to our rule, and, on the other, that our confidence was leading us onward to destruction. Some said that the Native Army should be narrowly watched, and held in control by sufficient bodies of European soldiery; other contended that we could commit no more fatal mistake than that of betraying the least suspicion of the Sipáhi, and suggesting even a remote possibility of one part of our Army ever being thrown into antagonism to the other. This controversy was half a century old. When, after the massacre of Vellúr, the Madras Government urged upon the Supreme Authority in Bengal the expediency of sending some reinforcements of European troops to the Coast, the latter refused to respond to the call, on the ground that such a movement would betray a general want of confidence in the Native Army, and might drive regiments still loyal into rebellion

under an impulse of fear. There was force in this argument, which will be readily appreciated by all who understand the character of the Sipáhi Army; and its cogency was not diminished by the fact put forth by the Madras Government that the European troops under their command were fewer by two thousand men than they had been before the recent large extension of territory. But a great lesson was to be learnt from the embarrassment which then arose; a lesson which ought to have been taken to the hearts of our rulers from one generation to another. It was then clearly revealed, not merely that "prevention is better than cure," but that prevention may be possible when cure is not; that we may hold danger in check by quietly anticipating it, but that, when it has arisen, the measures, to which we might have resorted before the fact, cannot be pursued, after it, without increasing the evil. If anything should teach us the wisdom of never suffering our European force, even in the most tranquil times, to decline below what we may call "the athletic standard," it is the fact that, when the times cease to be tranquil, we cannot suddenly raise it to that standard without exciting alarm and creating danger.

But this lesson was not learnt. Or, if Indian statesmen ever took it to their hearts, it was remorselessly repudiated in the Councils of the English nation. Other considerations than those of the actual requirements of our Indian empire were suffered to determine the amount of European strength to be maintained on the Company's establishment. Stated in round numbers, it may be said that the normal state of things, for some years, had been that of an Army of 300,000 men, of which 40,000 were European troops. Of these, roughly calculated, about one-third were the local European troops of the Country, raised exclusively for Indian service; the rest were the men of Royal regiments, Horse and Foot, periodically relieved according to the will of the Imperial Government, but paid out of the Revenues of India. In the five years preceding the departure of Lord Dalhousie from India, the strength of the Company's European troops had been somewhat increased, but the force which England lent to India was considerably reduced. In 1852, there were twenty-nine Royal regiments in the three Presidencies of India, mustering 28,000 men; in 1856, there were twenty-four Royal regiments, mustering 23,000 men. During those five years there had been a vast extension of

empire; but the aggregate European strength was lower in 1856 than in 1852 by nearly three thousand men. Between those two dates England had been engaged in a great war, and she wanted her troops for European service.

We deceive ourselves, when we think that European politics make no impression on the Indian Public. The impression may be very vague and indistinct; but ignorance is a magnifier of high power, and there are never wanting a few designing men, with clearer knowledge of the real state of things, to work upon the haziness of popular conceptions, and to turn a little grain of truth to account in generating a harvest of lies. That a number of very preposterous stories were industriously circulated, and greedily swallowed, during the Crimean War, and that these stories all pointed to the downfall of the British power, is not to be doubted. It was freely declared that Russia had conquered and annexed England, and that Queen Victoria had fled and taken refuge with the Governor-General of India. The fact that the war was with Russia gave increased significance to these rumours; for there had long been a chronic belief that the Russlóg would some day or other contend with us for the mastery of India; that, coming down in immense hordes from the North, and carrying with them the intervening Muhammadan States, they would sweep us, broken and humbled, into the sea. And it required no great acuteness to perceive that if a popular insurrection in India were ever to be successful, it was when the military resources of the empire were absorbed by a great European war. It is at such times as these, therefore, when there is always some disturbance of the public mind, that especial care should be taken to keep the European strength in India up to the right athletic standard. But, in these very times, the dependency is called upon to aid the empire, and her European regiments are reluctantly given up at the critical moment when she most desires to retain them. "The idea broached in Parliament," said a Native gentleman, "of drawing troops from India for the Crimean War, took intelligent natives of India by surprise." They saw plainly the folly of thus revealing our weakness to the subject races; for we could not more loudly proclaim the inadequacy of our resources than by denuding ourselves in one quarter of the world in order that we might clothe ourselves more sufficiently in another.

The Crimean War.

Nor was it this alone that, during the last years of Lord

Dalhousie's administration, "took intelligent natives of India by surprise." They saw us increasing our territory, in all directions, without increasing our European force. There were those who argued that territorial increase did not necessarily demand increased means of defence, as it might be a change, not an extension, of frontier; indeed, that the consolidation of our empire, by diminishing the numbers of our enemies, ought rather to be regarded as a reason for the diminution of our military strength. And this, in respect to our external enemies, it has already been observed, was not untrue.* But our dangers were from within, not from without; and it was forgotten that false friends might be more dangerous than open enemies. The English in India were, indeed, continually in a state of siege, and the conquest of their external enemies increased the perils of their position, for it deprived them of those safety-valves which had often before arrested a ruinous explosion. We were far too sanguine in our estimates of the results of conquest or annexation. We saw everything as we wished to see it. We saw contentment in submission, loyalty in quiescence; and took our estimate of national sentiment from the feelings of a few interested individuals who were making money by the change. But "intelligent natives" seeing clearly our delusion, knowing that we believed a lie, wondered greatly at our want of wisdom in suffering vast tracts of territory, perhaps only recently brought under British rule, to lie naked and defenceless, without even a detachment of English fighting-men to guard the lives of the new masters of the country. And little as we gave them credit for sagacity in such matters, they touched the very kernel of our danger with a needle's point, and predicted that our confidence would destroy us.

It was fortunate that, when we conquered the Panjáb, it was impossible to forget that Afghanistan, still festering with animosities and resentments born of the recent invasion, lay contiguous to the frontier of our new province. It was fortunate, too, that Henry Lawrence, being a man of a quick imagination, could feel as a Sikh chief or a Sikh soldier would feel under the new yoke of the Faringhi, and could therefore believe that we were not welcomed as deliverers from one end of the country to the other. But it was not fortunate that the

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* *Ante*, p. 202.

obvious necessity of garrisoning this frontier Province with a strong European force should have been practically regarded as a reason for denuding all the rest of India of English troops. Acting in accordance with the old traditions, that the only danger with which our position in India is threatened, is danger coming from the North-West, we massed a large body of Europeans in the Panjáb, and scattered, at wide intervals, the few remaining regiments at our disposal over other parts of our extended dominions. Thus we visibly became more and more dependent on our Native Army; and it needed only the declaration of weakness made, when England called on India for regiments to take part in the Crimean War, to assure "intelligent natives" that the boasted resources of England were wholly insufficient to meet the demands made upon them from different quarters, and that we could only confront danger in one part of the world by exposing ourselves to it in another.*

Effects of the Annexation of Oudh.

And this impression was strengthened by the fact that when Oudh was annexed to our British territories, although the province was thereby filled with the disbanded soldiery of the destroyed Native Government, and with a dangerous race of discontented nobles, whom the revolution had stripped of their privileges and despoiled of their wealth, the English appeared not to possess the means of garrisoning with European troops the country which they had thus seized. As Oudh was not a frontier province, there was no necessity to mass troops there, as in the Panjáb, for purposes of external defence; and the English, emboldened by success, were stronger than ever in their national egotism, and believed that, as they could not be regarded in Oudh in any other light than that of deliverers, there was small need to make provision against the possibility of internal disturbance. They left the province, therefore, after annexation had been proclaimed, with only a small handful of European fighting-men; and "intelligent natives" were again surprised to see that the English gentlemen were carrying out their new scheme of administration, to the ruin of almost every pre-existing interest in the country, with as much

* It has been alleged, too, that the subscriptions raised towards the support of the Patriotic Fund during the Crimean War, impressed intelligent natives with the belief that we were as short of money as we were of men.

confidence as if every district of Oudh were bristling with British bayonets. They saw, too, that the English had absorbed one of the last remaining Muhammadan States of India; and they felt that not only would this prodigious appropriation be regarded from one end of India to the other as the precursor of new seizures, and that it would thus greatly disturb the public mind, but that the very class of men on whom we appeared to rely for the continued security of our position were, of all others, most likely to resent this act of aggression.

For the annexation of Oudh had some results injurious to the Sipáhi. A very large portion of the Bengal Army was drawn from that province. In every village were the families of men who wore the uniform and bore the arms of the English. Being for the most part high-caste Hindus, they might not have regarded the peaceful revolution by which a Muhammadan monarchy was destroyed with any strong feelings of national resentment; and it is certain that this extension of territory was not provocative of the feelings of aversion and alarm with which they regarded those other seizures which had sent them to rot in the charnel-house of Sindh, or to perish in exile on the frontiers of Afghanistan. Their griefs were of another kind. The old state of things had suited them better. They had little sympathy, perhaps, with Wajid Ali, and service in Oudh brought them nearer to their homes. But so long as it was a foreign province, they derived certain special privileges and advantages from their position as the servants of the Company, and increased importance in the eyes of the people of the province. They had, indeed, been a favoured race, and as such the Sipáhi families had held up their heads above those of their countrymen who had no such bonds of privilege and protection to unite them to the Paramount State. "The Sipáhi," wrote the man who had studied the character and probed the feelings of the Native more deeply and philosophically perhaps than any of his contemporaries—"the Sipáhi is not the man of consequence he was. He dislikes annexations; among other reasons, because each new province added to the Empire widens his sphere of service, and at the same time decreases our foreign enemies and thereby the Sipáhi's importance. . . . . . The other day, an Oudh Sipáhi of the Bombay Cavalry at Nímach, being asked if he liked annexation, replied, 'No; I used to be a great man when I went home. The best in my village rose as

I approached. Now the lowest puff their pipes in my face.'" * Under the all-prevailing lawlessness and misrule, which had so long overridden the province, the English Sipáhi, whatever might be the wrongs of others, was always sure of a full measure of justice on appeal to the British Resident. If he himself were not, some member of his family was, a small yeoman, with certain rights in the land—rights which commonly among his countrymen were as much a source of trouble as a source of pride—and in all the disputes and contentions in which these interests involved him, he had the protection and assistance of the Resident, and right or wrong carried his point. In the abstract it was, doubtless, an evil state of things, for the Sipáhi's privileges were often used as instruments of oppression, and were sometimes counterfeited with the help of an old regimental jacket and pair of boots, by men who had never gone right-face to the word of command. But for this very reason they were dearly valued; and when the Sipáhis were thus brought down by annexation to the dead level of British subjects, when the Residency ceased to be, and all men were equally under the protection of the Commissioner, the Sipáhi families, like all the other privileged classes in Oudh, learnt what the revolution had cost them, and, wide apart as their several grievances lay from each other, they joined hands with other sufferers over a common grief.

Summary of deteriorating influences.

Looking, then, at the condition of the Native Army of India, and especially at the state of the Bengal regiments, as it was in the spring of 1856, we see that a series of adverse circumstances, culminating in the annexation of Oudh, some influencing him from without and some from within, had weakened the attachment of the Sipáhi to his colours. We see that, whilst the bonds of internal discipline were being relaxed, external events, directly or indirectly affecting his position, were exciting within

* Sir Henry Lawrence to Lord Canning, MS. Correspondence. I may give here in a note the words omitted in the text, as bearing, though not immediately, upon the Oudh question, and upon the general subject of annexation: "Ten years ago, a Sipáhi in the Panjáb asked an officer what we would do without them. Another said, 'Now you have got the Panjáb, you will reduce the Army.' A third remarked, when he heard that Sindh was to be joined to the Bengal Presidency, 'Perhaps there will be an order to join London to Bengal.'"

him animosities and discontents. We see that as he grew less faithful and obedient, he grew also more presuming; that whilst he was less under the control of his officers and the dominion of the State, he was more sensible of the extent to which we were dependent upon his fidelity, and therefore more capricious and exacting. He had been neglected on the one hand, and pampered on the other. As a soldier, he had in many ways deteriorated, but he was not to be regarded only as a soldier. He was a representative man, the embodiment of feelings and opinions shared by large classes of his countrymen, and circumstances might render him one day their exponent. He had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with passing events and public opinion. He mixed in cantonments, or on the line of march, with men of different classes and different countries; he corresponded with friends at a distance; he heard all the gossip of the Bazaars, and he read, or heard others read, the strange mixture of truth and falsehood contained in the Native newspapers. He knew what were the measures of the British Government, sometimes even what were its intentions, and he interpreted their meanings, as men are wont to do, who, credulous and suspicious, see insidious designs and covert dangers in the most beneficent acts. He had not the faculty to conceive that the English were continually originating great changes for the good of the people; our theories of government were beyond his understanding, and as he had ceased to take counsel with his English officer, he was given over to strange delusions, and believed the most dangerous lies.

But in taking account of the effect produced upon the Sipáhi's mind by the political and social measures of the British Government, we must not think only of the direct action of these measures—of the soldier's own reading of distant events, which might have had no bearing upon his daily happiness, and which, therefore, in his selfishness he might have been content to disregard. For he often read these things with other men's eyes, and discerned them with other men's understandings. If the political and social revolutions, of which I have written, did not affect him, they affected others, wiser in their generation, more astute, more designing, who put upon everything we did the gloss best calculated to debauch the Sipáhi's mind, and to prepare him, at a given signal, for an outburst of sudden madness. Childish, as he was, in his faith, there was nothing

easier than to make him believe all kinds and conditions of fictions, not only wild and grotesque in themselves, but in violent contradiction of each other. He was as ready to believe that the extension of our territory would throw him out of employment, as that it would inflict upon him double work. He did not choose between these two extremes; he accepted both, and took the one or the other, as the humour pleased him. There were never wanting men to feed his imagination with the kind of aliment which pleased it best, and reason never came to his aid to purge him of the results of this gross feeding.

Many were the strange glosses which were given to the acts of the British Government; various were the ingenious fictions woven with the purpose of unsettling the mind and uprooting the fidelity of the Sipáhi. But diverse as they were in many respects, there was a certain unity about them, for they all tended to persuade him that our measures were directed to one common end, the destruction of Caste, and the general introduction of Christianity into the land. If we annexed a province, it was to facilitate our proselytising operations, and to increase the number of our converts. Our resumption operations were instituted for the purpose of destroying all the religious endowments of the country. Our legislative enactments were all tending to the same result, the subversion of Hinduism and Muhammadanism. Our educational measures were so many direct assaults upon the religions of the country. Our penal system, according to their showing, disguised a monstrous attempt to annihilate caste, by compelling men of all denominations to feed together in the gaols. In the Lines of every regiment there were men eager to tell lies of this kind to the Sipáhi, mingled with assurances that the time was coming when the Faringhís would be destroyed to a man; when a new empire would be established, and a new military system inaugurated, under which the high rank and the higher pay monopolised by the English would be transferred to the people of the country. We know so little of what is stirring in the depths of Indian society; we dwell so much apart from the people; we see so little of them, except in full dress and on their best behaviour, that perilous intrigues and desperate plots might be woven, under the very shadow of our bungalows, without our perceiving any symptoms of danger. But still less can we discern that quiet under-current of hostility which is continually flowing on without any im-

mediate or definite object, and which, if we could discern it, would baffle all our efforts to trace it to its source. But it does not the less exist because we are ignorant of the form which it assumes, or the fount from which it springs. The men, whose business it was to corrupt the minds of our Sipáhis, were, perhaps, the agents of some of the old princely houses, which we had destroyed,* or members of old baronial families which we had brought to poverty and disgrace. They were, perhaps, the emissaries of Brahmanical Societies, whose precepts we were turning into folly, and whose power we were setting at naught. They were, perhaps, mere visionaries and enthusiasts, moved only by their own disordered imaginations to proclaim the coming of some new prophet or some fresh avatar of the Deity, and the consequent downfall of Christian supremacy in the East. But whatsoever the nature of their mission, and whatsoever the guise they assumed, whether they appeared in the Lines as passing travellers, as journeying hawkers, as religious mendicants, or as wandering puppet-showmen, the seed of sedition which they scattered struck root in a soil well prepared to receive it, and waited only for the ripening sun of circumstance to develop a harvest of revolt.

* It was asserted at the time of the "Mutiny of Vellúr," that not only were agents of the House of Tipú busy in all the lines of Southern India, but that there was scarcely a regiment into which they had not enlisted.

BOOK III.—THE OUTBREAK OF THE MUTINY.

[1856—1857.]

CHAPTER I.

WHEN, on the last day of February, 1856, "the Most Noble" the Marquis of Dalhousie placed the Portfolio of the Indian Empire in the hands of his successor, all men said that a great statesman and a great ruler was about to depart from the land. The praises that were bestowed upon him had been well earned. He had given his life to the public service; and many feared, as they sorrowfully bade him farewell, that he had given it up for the public good.

He stood before men at that time as the very embodiment of Success. Whatsoever he had attempted to do he had done with his whole heart, and he had perfected it without a failure or a flaw. The policy which during those eventful eight years had been so consistently maintained was emphatically his policy. The success, therefore, was fairly his. No man had ever stamped his individuality more clearly upon the public measures of his times. There are periods when the Government fades into an impersonality; when men cease to associate its measures with the idea of one dominant will. But during the reign then ended we heard little of "the Government"; in every one's mouth was the name of the individual Man.

Character of Lord Dalhousie.

And in this remarkable individual manhood there was the very essence and concentration of the great national manhood; there was an intense Englishism in him such as has seldom been equalled. It was the Englishism, too, of the nineteenth century, and of that particular epoch of the nineteenth century when well-nigh every one had the word "progress" on his lips, and stagnation was

both disaster and disgrace. A man of strong convictions and extraordinary activity of mind, he laid fast hold of the one abstract truth that English government, English laws, English learning, English customs, and English manners, are better than the government, the laws, the learning, the customs, and the manners of India; and with all the earnestness of his nature and all the strength of his understanding he wrought out this great theory in practice. He never doubted that it was good alike for England and for India that the map of the country which he had been sent to govern should present one surface of Red. He was so sure of this, he believed it so honestly, so conscientiously, that, courageous and self-reliant as he was, he would have carried out this policy to the end, if all the chief officers and agents of his government had been arrayed against him. But he commenced his career at a time when the ablest of our public functionaries in India, with a few notable exceptions, had forsaken the traditions of the old school—the school of Malcolm, of Elphinstone, and of Metcalfe—and stood eager and open-armed to embrace and press closely to them the very doctrines of which they perceived in Dalhousie so vigorous an exponent. He did not found the school; neither were his opinions moulded in accordance with its tenets. He appeared among them and placed himself at their head, just at the very time when such a coming was needed to give consistency to their faith, and uniformity to their works. The coincidence had all the force of a dispensation. No prophet ever had more devoted followers. No king was ever more loyally served. For the strong faith of his disciples made them strive mightily to accomplish his will; and he had in a rare degree the faculty of developing in his agents the very powers which were most essential to the fitting accomplishment of his work. He did not create those powers, for he found in his chief agents the instincts and energies most essential to his purpose; but he fostered, he strengthened and directed them, so that what might have run to weed and waste without his cherishing care, yielded under his culture, in ripe profusion, a harvest of desired results.

As his workmen were admirably suited to his work, so also was the field, to which he was called, the one best adapted to the exercise of his peculiar powers. In no other part of our empire could his rare administrative capacity have found such scope for development. For he was of an imperious and despotic nature, not submitting to control, and resenting opposition;

and in no situation could he have exercised a larger measure of power in the face of so few constitutional checks. His capacities required free exercise, and it may be doubted whether they would have been fully developed by anything short of this absolute supremacy. But sustained and invigorated by a sense of enormous power, he worked with all the energies of a giant. And he was successful beyond all example, so far as success is the full accomplishment of one's own desires and intentions. But one fatal defect in his character tainted the stream of his policy at the source, and converted into brilliant errors some of the most renowned of his achievements. No man who is not endowed with a comprehensive imagination can govern India with success. Dalhousie had no imagination. Lacking the imaginative faculty, men, after long years of experience, may come to understand the national character; and a man of lively imagination, without such experience, may readily apprehend it after the intercourse of a few weeks. But in neither way did Dalhousie ever come to understand the genius of the people among whom his lot was cast. He had but one idea of them—an idea of a people habituated to the despotism of a dominant race. He could not understand the tenacity of affection with which they clung to their old traditions. He could not sympathise with the veneration which they felt for their ancient dynasties. He could not appreciate their fidelity to the time-honoured institutions and the immemorial usages of the land. He had not the faculty to conceive that men might like their own old ways of government, with all their imperfections and corruptions about them, better than our more refined systems. Arguing all points with the preciseness of a Scotch logician, he made no allowance for inveterate habits and ingrained prejudices, and the scales of ignorance before men's eyes which will not suffer them rightly to discern between the good and the bad. He could not form a true dramatic conception of the feelings with which the representative of a long line of kings may be supposed to regard the sudden extinction of his royal house by the decree of a stranger and an infidel, or the bitterness of spirit in which a greybeard chief, whose family from generation to generation had enjoyed ancestral powers and privileges, might contemplate his lot when suddenly reduced to poverty and humiliation by an incursion of aliens of another colour and another creed. He could not see with other men's eyes; or think with other men's brains; or feel with other men's hearts.

With the characteristic unimaginativeness of his race he could not for a moment divest himself of his individuality, or conceive the growth of ancestral pride and national honour in other breasts than than those of the Campbells and the Ramsays.

And this egotism was cherished and sustained by the prevailing sentiments of the new school of Indian politicians, who, as I have said, laughed to scorn the doctrines of the men who had built up the great structure of our Indian Empire, and by the utterances of a Press, which, with rare ability, expounded the views of this school, and insisted upon the duty of universal usurpation. Such, indeed, was the prevailing tone of the majority, in all ranks from the highest to the lowest, that any one who meekly ventured to ask, "How would you like it yourself?" was reproached in language little short of that which might be fitly applied to a renegade or a traitor. To suggest that in an Asiatic race there might be a spirit of independence and a love of country, the manifestations of which were honourable in themselves, however inconvenient to us, was commonly to evoke as the very mildest result the imputation of being "Anti-British," whilst sometimes the "true British feeling" asserted itself in a less refined choice of epithets, and those who ventured to sympathise in any way with the people of the East were at once denounced as "white niggers." Yet among these very men, so intolerant of anything approaching the assertion of a spirit of liberty by an Asiatic people, there were some who could well appreciate and sympathise with the aspirations of European bondsmen, and could regard with admiration the struggles of the Italian, the Switzer, or the Pole to liberate himself, by a sanguinary contest, from the yoke of the usurper. But the sight of the dark skin sealed up their sympathies. They contended not merely that the love of country, that the spirit of liberty, as cherished by European races, is in India wholly unknown, but that Asiatic nations, and especially the nations of India, have no right to judge what is best for themselves; no right to revolt against the beneficence of a more civilised race of white men, who would think and act for them, and deprive them, for their own good, of all their most cherished rights and their most valued possessions.

So it happened that Lord Dalhousie's was a strong Government; strong in everything but its conformity to the genius of the people. It was a Government admirably conducted in accordance with the most approved principles of European

civilisation, by men whose progressive tendencies carried them hundreds of years in advance of the sluggish Asiatics, whom they vainly endeavoured to bind to the chariot-wheels of their refined systems. There was everything to give it complete success but the stubbornness of the national mind. It failed, perhaps, only because the people preferred darkness to light, folly to wisdom. Of course the English gentlemen were right and the Asiatics lamentably wrong. But the grand scriptural warning about putting new wine into old bottles was disregarded. The wine was good wine, strong wine; wine to gladden the heart of man. But poured into those old bottles it was sure, sooner or later, to create a general explosion. They forgot that there were two things necessary to successful government; one, that the measures should be good in themselves; and the other, that they should be suited to the condition of the recipients. Intent upon the one, they forgot the other, and erred upon the side of a progress too rapid and an Englishism too refined.

But at the bottom of this great error were benign intentions. Dalhousie and his lieutenants had a strong and steadfast faith in the wisdom and benevolence of their measures, and strove alike for the glory of the English nation and the welfare of the Indian people. There was something grand and even good in the very errors of such a man. For there was no taint of baseness in them; no sign of anything sordid or self-seeking. He had given himself up to the public service, resolute to do a great work, and he rejoiced with a noble pride in the thought that he left behind a mightier empire than he had found, that he had brought new countries and strange nations under the sway of the British sceptre, and sown the seeds of a great civilisation. To do this, he had made unstinting sacrifice of leisure, ease, comfort, health, and the dear love of wedded life, and he carried home with him, in a shattered frame and a torn heart, in the wreck of a manhood at its very prime, mortal wounds nobly received in a great and heroic encounter.

Great always is the interest which attaches to the question of succession; greatest of all when such a ruler as Dalhousie retires from the scene. Who was to take the place of this great and successful statesman? Who was to carry out to its final issue the grand policy which he had so brilliantly inaugurated? This was the question in all men's mouths as the old year passed away and the new year dawned upon India; in some

sort a remarkable year, for was it not the centenary of the great disaster of the Black Hole which had brought Clive's avenging army to Bengal? Ever at such times is there much talk of the expected advent of some member of the English Cabinet, some successful Colonial Governor, or some great Lord little experienced in statesmanship, of high lineage and dilapidated fortune. And so now there was the wonted high tide of speculation and conjecture, wild guesses and moonshine rumours of all kinds, from dim possibilities to gigantic nonsenses, until at last there came authentic tidings to India that the choice had fallen on Her Majesty's Postmaster-General, one of the younger members of Lord Palmerston's Cabinet.

Antecedents of Lord Canning.

Scarcely within bounds of possibility was it, that, in the midst of so great an epidemic of faith in Lord Dalhousie, England could send forth a statesmen to succeed him, whom her Anglo-Indian sons would not receive with ominous head-shakings, denoting grave doubts and anxious misgivings. Another great man, it was said, was needed to understand, to appreciate, to maintain, the policy of the hero whom they so glorified. But they knew little or nothing of Viscount Canning, except that he was the bearer of a great name. Thirty-four years before; all England had been talking about the acceptance of the Governor-Generalship by this man's father. There were a few, then, who, looking at the matter solely from an Indian point of view, exulted in the thought that one who had done such good service at the Board of Control, and whose abilities were known to be of the very highest order, was about to devote some of the best years of his life to the government of our great Eastern empire. There was another and a baser few, who, festering with jealousies, and animosities, and dishonourable fears, joyed most of all that they should see his face no more for years, or perhaps for ever. But the bulk of the English people deplored his approaching departure from among them, because they felt that the country had need of his services, and could ill bear the loss of such a man. And it was a relief to them when the sad close of Lord Castlereagh's career brought George Canning back from the visit, which was to have been his farewell, to Liverpool, to take his place again in the great Council of the nation.

1822.

Great, also, was the relief to George Canning himself—great

for many reasons; the greatest, perhaps, of all, that he was very happy in his family. In the first year of the century he had married a lady, endowed with a considerable share of the world's wealth, but with more of that better wealth which the world cannot give; the daughter and co-heiress of an old general officer named Scott. No man could have been happier in his domestic life; and domestic happiness is domestic virtue. Blind to the attractions of that Society in which he was so pre-eminently formed to shine, he found measureless delight in the companionship of his wife and children. And as an Indian life is more or less a life of separation, it was now a joy to him to think that the brief vision of Government House, Calcutta, had been replaced by the returning realities of the English fireside.*

Gloucester Lodge, 1822.

At this time the great statesmen had a son in his tenth year, at school with Mr. Carmalt, of Putney, on the banks of the Thames. He was the third son born to George Canning;† born during what was perhaps the happiest period of his father's life, his residence at Gloucester Lodge. This was the boy's birthplace. Lying between Brompton and Kensington, it was at that time almost in the country. There was not, perhaps, a pleasanter place near Town. It had a strange, memorable history, too, and it was among the notabilities of suburban London. In the days of Ranelagh, it had been, under the name of the Florida Gardens, a lesser rival to that fashionable haunt; and from this state, after an interval of desertion and decay, it had developed into a royal residence.‡ The Duchess of Gloucester bought the Gardens, built there a handsome Italian villa, lived and died there, and, passing away, bequeathed her interest in the estate to the Princess Sophia, who sold it to Mr. Canning. And there, in this pleasant umbrageous retreat,

* "The unsullied purity of Mr. Canning's domestic life," says his last and pleasantest biographer, "and his love of domestic pleasures (for after his marriage he seldom extended his intercourse with general society beyond those occasions which his station rendered unavoidable), were rewarded by as much virtue and devotion as ever graced the home of an English statesman." —*Bell's Life of Canning.*

† At this time Charles was the second surviving son. The eldest, George Charles, born in April, 1801, died in March, 1820. The second brother was in the navy.

‡ See *Bell's Life of Canning*, chapter x., which contains an animated sketch of the early history of Gloucester Lodge, and of the social and domestic environments of the great statesman's residence there.

on the 14th December, 1812, was born the third son of George Canning, who, in due course, was christened Charles John.

The Putney School.

In 1822, as I have said, when George Canning woke from his brief dream of Indian vice-regal power to take the seals of the Foreign Office, this boy Charles was under the scholastic care of Mr. Carmalt, of Putney. In those days his establishment enjoyed a great reputation. It was one of the largest and best private schools in the neighbourhood of London, perhaps in the whole kingdom, and, as the sons of our highest noblemen mingled there with those of our middle-class gentry, not a bad half-way house to the microcosm of Eton or Harrow. The impression which Charles Canning made upon the minds of his school-fellows was, on the whole, a favourable one. He was not a boy of brilliant parts, or of any large popularity; but he was remembered long afterwards as one who, in a quiet, unostentatious way, made it manifest to ordinary observers that there was, in schoolboy language, "something in him." One, whose letter is now before me, and who was with him for nearly two years in the same room at the Putney school, remembered, after a lapse of more than a third part of a century, the admiration with which he then regarded young Canning's "youthful indications of talent, and amiable and attractive manners."

Eton.

Two years after George Canning's surrender of the Governor-Generalship, his son Charles left Mr. Carmalt's and went to Eton. Eton was very proud of the father's great reputation, and eager to embrace the son; for, verily, George Canning had been an Etonian of Etonians, and had done as much, as a scholar and wit, to make Eton flourish as any man of his age. It was, perhaps, therefore, in a spirit of pure gratitude and veneration, and with no "hope of future favours," that worthy Provost Goodall, than whom perhaps no man ever had a keener appreciation both of scholarship and of wit, on intimation made to him that George Canning wished his son to be entered as an oppidan, sent Mr. Chapman, one of the masters of the school,* who had been selected as the boy's tutor, to examine him at Gloucester Lodge. These examinations, which determine the place in the school which the boy is to take, are commonly held in the tutor's house at Eton, not beneath the parental roof. But

* Afterwards Bishop of Colombo; now retired.

the Minister's son was examined in his father's library and in his father's presence at Gloucester Lodge; a double trial, it may be thought, of the young student's nerve, and not provocative of a successful display of scholarship. But it was successful.* Charles Canning was declared to be fit for the fourth form, and on the 4th of September, 1824, he commenced his career. It is on record that he was "sent up for good" for his proficiency in Latin verse. It is on record, also, if the recording minister at Eton does not kindly blot out such traces of boyish error, that he was also sent up for bad; in more correct Etonian phraseology, "in the bill," marked for the flogging block. And it is traditional that the avenging hand of Head-master Keate was sometimes stayed by a tender reluctance to apply the birch to the person of Secretary Canning's son. On the whole, perhaps, it is historically true that, at Eton, he had no very marked reputation of any kind. He was good-looking, and a gentleman, which goes for something; but I do not know that he was a great rower, a great cricketer, or a great swimmer, or was in any sense an athlete of the first water and the admiration of his companions; and, scholastically, it is remembered of him that he had "a reputation rather for intelligence, accuracy, and painstaking, than for refined scholarship, or any remarkable powers of composition."

But on passing away from Eton, the stature of his mind was soon greatly enlarged. At the close of 1827, having risen to the Upper division of the fifth form, he received the parting gifts of his schoolfellows; and soon afterwards became the private pupil of the Rev. John Shore, a nephew of Sir John Shore, Governor-General of India, and known to a later generation as Lord Teignmouth. This worthy Christian gentleman and ripe scholar lived, but without church preferment, at Potton, a quiet little market-town in Bedfordshire, receiving pupils there of the better sort. Among the inmates of his house was the grandson of the first Lord Harris, with whom Charles Canning

* I am indebted for this incident to Sir Robert Phillimore, Queen's Advocate. The memoranda from which it is taken adds: "The well-known description of the storm in the first Æneid, 'Interea magno misceri murmure pontum,' &c., was the passage chosen for the trial of his proficiency, and the Bishop now remembers the anxiety with which the father watched the essay of his son, and the smile of approval which greeted his reading of the rather difficult transition, 'Quos ego—sed motos,' &c., and the final 'Not so bad,' which followed at the close of the whole translation."

entered into bonds of friendship, riveted at Oxford, strengthened in public life at home, and again by strange coincidence in India, and broken only by death. Here, doubtless, he made great progress in scholarship. Perhaps the death of his father, and the after-honours which were conferred on the family, and, more than all, the subsequent calamitous end of his elder brother,* awakened within him a sense of the responsibilities of his position, and roused him to new exertions. Though born the third in succession of George Canning's sons, he was now the eldest, the only one. He and his sister alone survived. He was now the heir to a peerage, sufficiently, though not splendidly, endowed, and there was a public career before him. He applied himself to his books.†

August 8th, 1827.

His next step was to the University. In December, 1828, he was entered on the Roll as a Student of Christ Church, Oxford, as his father had been entered just forty years before. Among the foremost of his fellow-students were Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Robert Phillimore,‡ all of whom lived to take parts, more or less prominent, in public affairs. Among other members of the same distinguished house, at that time, was the young Lord Lincoln, heir to the Dukedom of Newcastle, and the representative of the great Scotch House of Ramsay, ennobled by the Earldom of Dalhousie. But the most intimate of all his associates was the present Lord De Tabley, with whom he lived in the closest bonds of friendship to the latest day of his life. By him, and a few other chosen companions, he was dearly loved and much respected; but neither achieving nor seeking extensive popularity among his cotemporaries, he was regarded by the outer University world as a man of a reserved and distant manner, and of a somewhat cold and unimpulsive temperament. The few in the inner circle knew that he was not cold; knew that he had a true loving heart, very loyal and constant in its affections; knew that in the society of his familiar friends he had a pleasant, a genial, and sometimes a playful manner, that

Oxford.

* *William Pitt Canning, then a Captain in the Royal Navy, was drowned* while bathing at Madeira, in September, 1828.

† It need scarcely be indicated that the widow of George Canning, on his *death*, was created a Viscountess, with remainder to his eldest son.

‡ *The present (1861) Chancellor of the Exchequer; the late Lord Elgin,* Governor-General of India; and the present Queen's Advocate.

he had a fine scholarly taste, a fund of quiet humour, a keen appreciation of character, and that he was, all in all, a delightful companion. They had great hope, too, of his future career, though he did not seem to be ambitious; nay, rather, it appeared to those who closely observed him, that he was haunted and held back by the thought of his father's renown, and a diffidence of his own capacity to maintain the glories of the name. But, although he did not care to take part in the proceedings of debating societies, and, apparently, took small interest in the politics of the great world, he was anxious that at least his University career should do no dishonour to his lineage, and that if he could not be a great statesman, he might not stain the scholarly reputation enjoyed by two generations of Cannings before him. He strove, therefore, and with good results, to perfect himself in the classic languages; and even more assiduous were his endeavours to obtain a mastery over his own language. At an early age he acquired a thoroughly good English style; not resonant or pretentious; not splintery or smart; but pure, fluent, transparent, with the meaning ever visible beneath it, as pebbles beneath the clearest stream.

His efforts bore good fruit. In 1831 he wrote a Latin Prize Poem, on the "Captivity of Caractacus"; and recited it in the great hall of Christ Church, standing beneath his father's picture.* And in the Easter term of 1833 he took his degree, with high honours: a first class in Classics, and a second in Mathematics. He was then in his twenty-first year, and Parliament would soon be open to him. But he was in no

* I am indebted for this to Sir Robert Phillimore. I give the incident in his own words: "In the year 1831, he won the Christ Church prize for Latin verse. The subject was 'Caractacus Captivus Romam ingreditur.' The verses were, *as usual, recited in the hall. It was a remarkable scene. In that magnificent banqueting-room are hung the portraits of students who* have reflected honour upon the House which reared them by the distinctions which they have won in after life. Underneath the portrait of George Canning, the recollection of whose brilliant career and untimely end was still fresh in the memory of men, stood the son, in the prime of youth, recalling by his eminently handsome countenance the noble features of the portrait, while repeating the classical prize poem, which would have gladdened his father's heart. Generally speaking, the resident members of Christ Church alone compose the audience when the prize poem is recited. But on this *occasion there was a stranger present—the old faithful friend of Mr. Canning, his staunch political adherent through life—Mr. Sturges Bourne. He had* travelled from London for the purpose of witnessing the first considerable achievement of the younger Canning."—*MS. Memorandum.*

hurry to enter upon the realities of public life. He was diffident of his oratorical powers; he was constitutionally shy; and it did not appear to him that the House of Commons was a theatre in which he was ever likely to make a successful appearance. Moreover, he had other work in hand at that time; other yearnings to keep down any young ambitions that might be mounting within him. Love and courtship filled up a sweet interlude in his life, as they do in the lives of most men whose story is worth telling; and, in due course, they bore the rich fruit of happy wedlock. On the 5th of September, 1835, the Honourable Charles John Canning espoused the Honourable Charlotte Stuart, eldest daughter of Lord Stuart De Rothesay, a lady of a serene and gentle beauty, and many rare gifts of mind.

But, after a year of wedded life, he was prevailed upon to enter Parliament, and in August, 1836, he was returned for Warwick. In that month, however, Parliament was prorogued, and on its reassembling at the commencement of the following year, he was content to be a silent member. His opportunities, indeed, were very few, for his whole career in the House of Commons extended over a period of little more than six weeks. During the month of February and the early part of March he attended in his place with praiseworthy regularity.* But, on the 15th of the latter month, his mother, Viscountess Canning, died; and, on the 24th of April, he took his seat in the House of Lords.

For nearly twenty years he sate in that House, taking no very prominent part in the debates, but doing his duty in a quiet, unostentatious way, and gradually making for himself a reputation as a conscientious, painstaking young statesman, who might some day do good service to his country and honour to his great name. His political opinions, which were shared by most of his distinguished cotemporaries at Christ Church, were characterised by that chastened Liberalism which had found its chief exponent in Sir Robert Peel; and when, in 1841, that great Parliamentary leader was invited to form a Ministry, Lord Canning, Lord Lincoln, and Mr. Gladstone were offered, and accepted, official seats. The seals of the Foreign Office had been placed in the hands of Lord Aberdeen. He had

* His name is to be found in all the principal division lists. He voted sometimes against Lord Melbourne's Government, but more frequently with it.

a high opinion of, and a personal regard for, Lord Canning, and there was no one whom the veteran statesman wished so much to associate with himself in office as George Canning's son. About the same time another distinguished member of the House of Lords was also moved by a strong desire to have the benefit of the young statesman's official co-operation and personal companionship. This was Lord Ellenborough, who, on the formation of the Peel Ministry, had been appointed President of the Board of Control, but who had subsequently been selected to succeed Lord Auckland as Governor-General of India. He offered to take Canning with him in the capacity of Private Secretary.

Creditable as this offer was to the discernment of Lord Ellenborough, and made in perfect sincerity, it was one little likely to be accepted by a man of high social position, good political prospects, and a sufficient supply of the world's wealth. Lord Canning elected to remain in England, and entered official life as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He liked his work; he did it well, and he had the entire confidence of his chief. But he did not take an active part in the debates and discussions of the House of Lords. The presence, in the same Chamber, of the Chief of his Department, relieved him from the responsibility of ministerial explanations and replies, and his constitutional reserve forbade all unnecessary displays. It was not, indeed, until the Session of 1846 found him in the office of Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, that he took any prominent part in the business of the House. If the position which he then held afforded no opportunity for the development of his powers either as an orator or a debater, it kept him continually in Parliamentary harness, and the training was of service to him. It lasted, however, but a little time. At the end of June, 1846, Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues resigned, and a Whig Cabinet was formed under the leadership of Lord John Russell.

Lord Canning was then "in opposition," but in heart he was a Liberal, and willing to support liberal measures, without reference to the distinctions of party. When, therefore, in May, 1848, Lord Lansdowne moved the second reading of the Jewish Disabilities Bill, Lord Canning was the first to speak in support of it. He answered Lord Ellenborough, who had moved the amendment, and he voted against all his old colleagues then in the Upper House, with the exception of Lord

Hardinge. But in 1850 he supported, in a speech displaying an entire mastery of the subject, the resolution of Lord Derby condemnatory of the Foreign Policy of Lord Palmerston; and he spoke against the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell. So little, indeed, was he considered to be pledged to any party, that when the Russell Cabinet resigned in the spring of 1851, and Lord Derby was invited to form an administration, the great Conservative leader saw no reason why he should not invite Canning to become a member of it. The offer then made was a tempting one, for it was the offer of a seat in the Cabinet second in importance only to that of the First Minister. To the son of George Canning it was especially tempting, for it was the offer of the seals of the Foreign Office. In that office the father had built up his reputation, and the son had already laid the foundation of an honourable career of statesmanship. It was the department which, above all others, Lord Canning best knew and most desired. He had served a long apprenticeship in it, and if his humility suggested any doubts of his capacity to direct its affairs, they must have been removed by the manner in which he was invited to take their direction.

The offer now made to him was made through his old official chief, Lord Aberdeen, who pressed him to accept it. But there were many grave considerations which caused him to hesitate. He had sat for some years on the same ministerial bench with Lord Derby, but the latter had separated himself from his party, and the cause of the disruption was the liberal commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel, in favour of which Canning had freely declared his opinions. He had condemned the foreign policy of the Whig party; but, on the other hand, there were matters of home government in which his liberality was far in advance of the opinions of Lord Derby and his colleagues; and, on the whole, he felt that he could not honestly and consistently support the Administration which he was invited to enter. He judged rightly, and in such a case he judged wisely. Lord Derby failed to construct a Ministry, and the Whigs resumed office for another year. This was the turning-point of Lord Canning's career, and it is impossible to say how different might have been the story which I am now about to write, if these overtures had been accepted.

In the following year, Lord Derby again endeavoured, and with better success, to form a Ministry, but its career was of

brief duration. In November, its place was filled by an Administration under the premiership of Lord Aberdeen, composed of the leading members of the Governments both of Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell. In this Coalition Ministry Lord Canning held the office of Postmaster-General. Though held by many a distinguished man, the post was not one to satisfy the desires of an ambitious one. But he was not disappointed or discouraged. He knew the difficulties which lay in the path of his leader,* and he addressed himself cheerfully and assiduously to his work, with a steadfast resolution to elevate the importance of the appointment he held, by doing in it the largest possible amount of public good. In this office he had first an opportunity of displaying that high conscientious courage which bears up and steers right on, in spite of the penalties and mortifications of temporary unpopularity. What was wrong he endeavoured to set right; and knowing how much depended on the personal exertions of individual men, he strove, even at the expense of certain very clamorous vested interests, to obtain the utmost possible amount of competency for the performance of all the higher departmental duties. During his administration of the Post-office many important reforms were instituted, and much progress made in good work already commenced. So effectually, indeed, had he mastered all the complicated details of the department, that when the Coalition Ministry was dissolved and a new Government formed under Lord Palmerston, the public interests required that there should be no change at the Post-office; so Lord Canning was reappointed to his old office, but with further acknowledgment of his good services in the shape of a seat in the Cabinet. But it was not ordered that he should hold the office much longer. There was more stirring work in store for him. His old friend and contemporary, Lord Dalhousie, was coming home from India, and it was necessary that a new Governor-General should be appointed in his place. Practically the selection, in such cases, was made by the Imperial Government, but constitutionally the appointment emanated from the East India Company. The President of the Board of Control and the Chairman of the Court of Directors commonly took counsel together, when the Cabinet

* In a "coalition ministry" there is necessarily an exceptional number of claimants for the higher offices with seats in the Cabinet. In the arrangements then made the seals of the Foreign Office fell, in the first instance, to Lord John Russell.

gravely discourse on the marvel and the miracle of our Indian Empire. Nor was it a small thing that a man selected to govern a magnificent dependency beyond the seas, should thus, in the presence of his old and his new masters, and many of his coadjutors in the great work before him, publicly accept his commission, and declare to the people in the West and in the East the principles which were to regulate his conduct and to shape his career. The words uttered on these occasions rose far above the ordinary convivial level of after-dinner speeches. There was a gravity and a solemnity in them, appreciated not merely by those who heard them spoken, but by thousands also, to whom the Press conveyed them, in the country which they most concerned; and on the minds of the more intelligent Natives the fact of this great ceremonial of departure made a deep impression, and elevated in their imaginations the dignity of the coming ruler.

Seldom or never had this ceremonial assumed a more imposing character than that which celebrated the appointment of Lord Canning to the Governor-Generalship of India. In the great Banqueting Hall of the London Tavern were assembled on that 1st of August many members of the Cabinet, including among them some of Canning's dearest friends; others besides of his old companions and fellow-students; and all the most distinguished of the servants of the Company at that time in the country. Mr. Elliot Macnaghten, Chairman of the East India Company, presided, and after dinner proposed the accustomed toasts. It was natural and right that, when doing honour to the newly-appointed Governor-General, the speaker should pay a fitting tribute to the distinguished statesman who was then bringing his work to a close; it was natural and graceful that tribute should be paid also to the worth of the elder Canning, who had done India good service at home, and had been selected to hold the great office abroad which his son was proceeding to fill; but there was something to a comparatively untried man perilous in such associations, and the younger Canning, with instinctive modesty, shrunk from the invidious suggestion. Perhaps there were some present who drew comparisons, unfavourable to the son, between the early careers of the two Cannings, which had entitled them to this great distinction; but when the younger stood up to speak, every one was struck—the many judging by busts and pictures, and the few recalling the living likeness of George Canning—by his

great resemblance to his father. The singularly handsome face, the intellectual countenance, and, above all, the noble "Canning brow," like a block of white marble, bespoke no common capacity for empire, and gave emphatic force to the words he uttered. He said, after the usual expression of thanks for the kind words spoken, and the kind reception accorded to them, that the kindness which he had received had not created any delusion in his mind, for whether he contemplated the magnitude of the task that awaited him, or the great achievements of the distinguished men who had preceded him, he was painfully sensible that the labourer was unequal to the great work that had been entrusted to his hands. He was not ashamed to confess that there were times when he was tempted to shrink from the responsibility that awaited him. But this feeling, he added, was not inconsistent with his determination to devote all the energies of his mind, every hour, nay, every minute of his time, every thought and every inspiration, to the discharge of the duties which he had that day accepted from the hands of the Company. There were, however, other considerations, which had greatly reassured and encouraged him; "You have," he said, turning to the Chairman, "assured me, this day, of what you rightly describe as the generous confidence and co-operation of the Court of Directors. I thank you for that assurance, and I rely on it implicitly, for I know the body of which you are the head are, wherever they bestow their confidence, no niggards in supporting those who honestly and faithfully serve them." And then, not perhaps without a knowledge of what, more than a quarter of a century before, his father had said on a similar occasion,* he added, "I feel that I can also rely on the cordial support and sympathy of my noble friend at the head of the Government, and of all those colleagues with whom I have had the proud satisfaction of serving as a Minister of the Crown, but, above all, I delight in the co-operation—for on that I must daily and hourly rely—of those two admirable bodies, the Civil Service and the Army of India. I hardly know

* The occasion alluded to was the farewell banquet given by the East India Company to Sir John Malcolm, on his appointment to the government of Bombay. Then it was that George Canning said: "There cannot be found in the history of Europe the existence of any monarchy which, within a given time, has produced so many men of the first talents, in civil and military life, as India has first trained for herself, and then given to their native country."

whether there is any feature of our Government, any portion of our institutions, upon which Englishmen may look with more honest exultation than those two noble branches of our Public Service. The men of those branches have done much for the advancement of India, and have sent forth from their ranks men who were efficient in war and peace, in numbers of which any monarchy in Europe might be proud, and who have rescued their countrymen from charges formerly, and not unjustly, levelled against them of dealing sometimes too harshly with those whom they were bound to succour and protect. Sir, it is the possession of such men which enables you to exhibit a spectacle unequalled in the world's history—that of a hundred and fifty millions of people submitting in peace and contentment, in a country teeming with wealth, to the government of strangers and aliens."

Then, after a few more words on the high character of the Services, and a brief declaration of the fact that he assumed office "without a single promise or pledge to any expectant," he proceeded with increased gravity and solemnity of utterance, almost, indeed, as one under the spell of prophecy: "I know not what course events may take. I hope and pray that we may not reach the extremity of war. I wish for a peaceful time of office, but I cannot forget that in our Indian Empire that greatest of all blessings depends upon a greater variety of chances and a more precarious tenure than in any other quarter of the globe. We must not forget that in the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing larger and larger, may at last threaten to burst, and overwhelm us with ruin. What has happened once may happen again. The disturbing causes have diminished certainly, but they are not dispelled. We have still discontented and heterogeneous peoples united under our sway; we have still neighbours before whom we cannot altogether lay aside our watchfulness; and we have a frontier configuration that renders it possible that in any quarter, at any moment, causes of collision may arise. Besides, so intricate are our relations with some subsidiary states, that I doubt whether in an empire so vast and so situated it is in the power of the wisest Government, the most peaceful and the most forbearing, to command peace. But if we cannot command, we can at least deserve it, by taking care that honour, good faith, and fair dealing are on our side; and then if, in spite of us, it should

become necessary to strike a blow, we can strike with a clear conscience. With blows so dealt the struggle must be short and the issue not doubtful. But I gladly dismiss from my mind apprehensions that may not be realised, and joyfully recognise a large arena of peaceful usefulness, in which I hope for your kind assistance and co-operation."

Equally surprised were the few then present, who were familiar with Lord Canning's parliamentary utterances, and the many, who had never heard him speak, but had been told that he was "no orator"; for the speech which they now heard from his lips was all that such a speech ought to have been. It was impressive rather than impassioned; slowly spoken, with a deliberate gravity, every sentence making itself felt, and every word making itself heard in the farthest corners of that great Banqueting Hall. There were few present in whose estimation the speaker had not risen before he resumed his seat; few present who did not, years afterwards, remember with strong emotion that picture of the little cloud rising in an unexpected quarter, and in time obscuring the firmament and overshadowing the land. Some, perhaps, thought also of another speech, then delivered by a more practised speaker; for the First Minister of the Crown, on that August evening, let fall some memorable words. It was only in common course that he should speak of the qualifications of his colleague for the high office to which he had been appointed; only in common course that he should express his gratitude to the Company who so materially lightened the cares of the Sovereign and her ministers. But when Lord Palmerston dwelt on "the significant fact that, whereas of old all civilisation came from India, through Egypt, now we, who were then barbarians, were carrying back civilisation and enlightenment to the parent source," and added, "perhaps it might be our lot to confer on the countless millions of India a higher and a holier gift than any real human knowledge; but that must be left to the hands of time and the gradual improvement of the people," he supplemented Lord Canning's prophecy, though he knew it not, and pointed to the quarter from which the little cloud was to arise.

But although Lord Canning had been sworn in at the India House, and had stood before the magnates of the land as Governor-General elect, he was still a member of the Cabinet and her Majesty's Postmaster-General. Parliament was prorogued on the 14th of August, and in accordance with that wise

official usage, which recognises the necessity of holidays no less for statesmen than for schoolboys, the Queen's Ministers dispersed themselves over the country, and Lord Canning went to Scotland. It had been settled that he should receive from the hands of Lord Dalhousie the reins of Indian Government on the 1st of February, 1856, and his arrangements, involving a short sojourn in Egypt, and visits to Ceylon, Bombay, and Madras, had been made with a view to his arrival at Calcutta on that day. But at Dalhousie's own request, his resignation was subsequently deferred to the 1st of March. When this request was first made to him, Canning thought that the intention of the change was simply to allow the old Governor-General more time not only to consummate the annexation of Oudh, but to confront the first difficulties of the revolution; and it appeared to him, thinking this, that the postponement might be interpreted alike to his own and to his predecessor's disadvantage. It might have been said that the new Governor-General shrank from encountering the dangers of the position, or that the measure was so distasteful to him, on the score of its injustice, that he could not bring himself to put his hand to the work. Both assumptions would have been utterly erroneous. The question of the annexation of Oudh had been a Cabinet question, and as a member of the Cabinet, Lord Canning had given his assent to the policy, which after much discussion in Leadenhall and in Downing-street, found final expression in the Court's despatch of the 19th of November. The policy itself had been already determined, although the precise terms of the instructions to be sent to the Government of India were still under consideration, when Dalhousie's proposal reached him; and he was willing to accept all the responsibilities of the measure. The proposed delay, therefore, did not at first sight please him; but when, from a later letter, he learnt that Dalhousie required a few more weeks of office, not for special, but for general purposes; that he needed time to gather up the ends of a large number of administrative details, the case was altered, and he assented, with the concurrence of the Court of Directors, to the change.*

* "As long," he wrote to the Chairman, "as it turned upon Oudh alone, I felt that there was some difficulty in making the change proposed by Lord Dalhousie, and some risk of its intention being misrepresented to the disadvantage of both of us. But it is now clear that for other reasons, apart from Oudh, and for the general winding up of the work on his hands, it will be a great help to him to have a month more time. These are his very words to

A few days afterwards, Lord Canning turned his face again towards the South, to superintend the final arrangements for his departure, and to take leave of his friends. Thus the month of October and the greater part of November were passed; but not without some study of Indian questions, some useful training for the great work upon which he was about to enter. On the 21st of November he went by command to Windsor, accompanied by Lady Canning, who was among her Majesty's cherished friends, and on the 23rd returned to London, after taking final leave of the Queen. Another day or two, and he had commenced his overland journey to the East. From the French capital he wrote, on the last day of November: "I intended to leave Paris this afternoon, but I received notice in the morning that the Emperor wished to see me to-morrow, so that it will be Tuesday morning (December 4th) before we embark at Marseilles. We still hope to reach Alexandria on the 10th." He arrived there, however, not before the 12th, and after a day's halt pushed on to Cairo, where he was received and entertained magnificently by orders of the Pacha, who was at that time absent from his capital.

The party consisted of Lord and Lady Canning, his nephew Lord Hubert de Burgh,* Captain Bouverie, A.D.C., and Dr. Leckie. There was abundant time for an exploration of the wonders of Egypt, and, as the fine climate of the country invited a protracted sojourn there, it was arranged that some weeks should be spent in pleasant and profitable excursions, and that they should embark at Suez about the middle of the month of January. "The Pacha was in Upper Egypt until to-day," wrote Lord Canning to Mr. Macnaghten, on the 17th of December, "when he returned to this neighbourhood. I am to see him to-morrow, and on the following day we set out on our expedition up the Nile. Thanks to a steamer, which the Pacha lends us, we shall be able to accomplish all we wish, and to embark on the *Feroze* immediately upon its arrival at Suez,

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me; and I cannot hesitate, so far as I am concerned, to do that which will be agreeable and convenient to him, and probably advantageous to the public interests. I hope, therefore, that you will feel no difficulty in complying with Lord Dalhousie's wish, by putting off my succession until the day he names."—*Lord Canning to Mr. Macnaghten, September* 20, 1855.—*MS. Correspondence.*

* Afterwards Lord Hubert Canning. [Now Marquis of Clanrikarde. —G. B. M.]

which, according to a letter from Lord Dalhousie, that met me at Alexandria, will not be until close upon the 12th of January. . . . The magnificence, not to say extravagance, of our reception here far exceeds anything that I had expected. I shall need to be very profuse of my thanks to the Pacha to-morrow."

It would be pleasant to follow Lord Canning and his family on their river-voyage, the grateful experiences of which he has himself recorded, but these personal incidents have no connection with the stern story before me, and the temptation, therefore, to enlarge upon them must be resisted. The programme of his movements given in the above letter to the Chairman of the Company, was realised with but little departure from the original design. The Governor-General elect halted at Aden, where, under the guidance of Brigadier Coghlan*—an officer of the Company's Artillery, one of those excellent public servants who, partly in a military, partly in a diplomatic capacity, represent great interests and undertake great responsibilities in the East—Lord Canning made his first acquaintance with the Sipáhi Army of India. From Aden he steamed to Bombay, where he arrived on the 28th of January, 1856, and first planted his foot on Indian soil. "I found," he wrote to Mr. Macnaghten on the 2nd of February, "that Lord Dalhousie had given orders that I should be received with the full honours of Governor-General in possession; and of course I did nothing to check or escape from the demonstrations with which we were met, though I did not desire or expect them. I have been unceasingly busy for two-thirds of every twenty-four hours since our arrival; and by the 5th or 6th I hope to have seen nearly all that calls for ocular inspection in the city and its neighbourhood. We shall then embark for Madras; for I have given up all thoughts of stopping at Ceylon, unless to coal, and hope to arrive there on the 14th or 15th. I cannot sufficiently congratulate myself on having come round by this Presidency. It has shown me much that I should not easily have learnt otherwise." It was a disappointment to him that he had not time to visit Ceylon, for his old Eton tutor, Chapman, had developed into Bishop of Colombo and there would have been a grand old Etonian pleasure, on both sides, in talking over old times. But there was consolation in the thought that his friend Lord Harris, his fellow-pupil in the Bedfordshire market-town, was

* Afterwards Sir William Coghlan, K.C.B.

Governor of Madras. In that presidency he spent a few pleasant days, sojourning at Guindy, and then on the 25th of February set out to face the realities of Indian Government, and steamed up the Bay of Bengal.

On the last day of February, Lord Canning disembarked at Calcutta; and, proceeding to Government House, at once took his oaths of office and his seat in Council. It is the custom in such cases. No time is left for any question to arise as to who is Governor-General of India. So brief did the whole operation appear to him, that he wrote home that he had been sworn in and installed "within five minutes after touching land." As his dignities and responsibilities commenced at once, so did his work. At the end of his first week of office, he wrote that such had been the pressure of public business, that he had found time only for "one look out of doors" since he arrived. During that first week Lord Dalhousie tarried in Calcutta, and the past and future of the Government of India was discussed with interest, the depths of which were stirred by varying circumstances, between those earnest-minded men: the one all readiness to teach, the other all eagerness to learn. Dull and prosaic as its details often appear to Englishmen at a distance, it is difficult to describe the living interest with which statesmen in India of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, perpetually regard their work.

February 29, 1856.

No man ever undertook the office of Governor-General of India under the impression that it would be a sinecure. But it is scarcely less true that no man, whatever opinion he may have formed in England, ever entered upon its duties without discovering that he had greatly underrated the extent of its labours. The current of work is so strong and so continuous; so many waters meet together to swell the stream; that at first even a strong man trying to breast it may feel that he is in danger of being overwhelmed. Time lessens the difficulty; but at the outset, the multiplicity of unfamiliar details distracts and bewilders even the sharpest wit and the clearest brain; and the first result is apt to be a chaos. Box after box is placed upon the Governor-General's table; and each box is crammed with papers rugged with the names of strange men and stranger places, and references to unknown events and incomprehensible states of society. By some means or other, he must master the antecedents of every case that comes before him for decision; and there are

First days of Government.

often very intricate cases purposely left for his decision, that he may not be embarrassed by the judgments of his predecessor. Week after week goes by and little impression is made upon this pile of work. "Another fortnight is gone," wrote Lord Canning towards the end of March, "and I am beginning to gather up by slow degrees the threads of business, as it passes before me; but it is severe work to have to give so much time to the bygones of almost every question that comes up; and some weeks more must pass before I shall feel myself abreast of current events." There was a strong conscientiousness within the new Governor-General which would not suffer him to pass anything lightly over, and he endeavoured to understand all that came before him even at the risk of some inconvenient delays.

So he did not rush at his work; but quietly confronted it, and was in no haste to impress people with a sense of the profundity of his wisdom and the greatness of his self-reliance. He knew that he had much to learn, and he adopted the best means of learning it; for he invited all the chief agents of his Government, scattered over the country, especially those who were representing British interests at the Native Courts, to correspond confidentially with him on matters relating to their respective charges; an invitation which gave to every man thus addressed full liberty to declare his sentiments and to expound his views. And thus he escaped the danger on the one hand of surrendering his own judgment, by succumbing to the influence of some two or three public functionaries immediately attached to the Executive Government, and, on the other, of the over-confident exercise of a dominant self-will rejecting all external aids, and refusing to walk by other men's experiences. He knew that there was no royal road to a knowledge of India; and he was well content that the first year of his administration should be unostentatiously devoted to the great duty of learning his work.

There were able men, too, at his elbow to assist him to a correct knowledge of facts, and to the formation of sound opinions. The Supreme Council consisted at that time of General John Low, Mr. Dorin, Mr. John Peter Grant, and Mr. Barnes Peacock. Of the first I can say little in this place that has not been already said. The only charge laid against him by the assailants of the Government was that he was well stricken in years. But although one who had fought beside Malcolm at Mehidpur, and then not in his first

The Council.

General Low.

youth, must have lost some of the physical energy that animated him in his prime, his intellect was unimpaired. Ceasing to be a man of action, he had subsided gracefully into the condition of a councillor, the Nestor of the Political Service, a veteran without a stain. No man had so large an acquaintance with the Native Courts of India; no man knew the temper of the people better than John Low. He could see with their eyes, and speak with their tongues, and read with their understandings. And, therefore, he looked with some dismay at the wide-spread Englishism of the Dalhousie school, and sorrowfully regarded the gradual dying out of the principles in which he had been nurtured and trained, and to which, heedless of their unpopularity, he clung with honest resolution to the last. Dalhousie had too often disregarded his counsel; but he had always respected the man. And now Canning equally admired the personal character of his colleague, but was not equally minded to laugh his principles to scorn.

Mr. Dorin.

Of the two Bengal civilians who sat in that Council, it may be said that the one owed his position there apparently to chance, the other to his unquestionable abilities. Mr. Dorin was not a man of great parts; he was not a man of high character. If he had any official reputation, it was in the capacity of a financier; and finance was at that time the weakest point of our Government. He had limited acquaintance with the country, and but small knowledge of the people. He had no earnestness; no enthusiasm; no energy. He had a genius for making himself comfortable, and he had no superfluous activities of head or heart to mar his success in that particular direction. He had supported the policy of Lord Dalhousie, and had recorded in his time a number of minutes expressing in two emphatic words, which saved trouble and gained favour, his concurrence with the most noble the Governor-General; and now if the new ruler was not likely to find him a very serviceable colleague, there was no greater chance of his being found a troublesome one.

John Peter Grant.

In John Grant the Governor-General might have found both. He was many years younger than his brother civilian, but he had done infinitely more work. In him, with an indolent sleepy manner was strangely combined extraordinary activity of mind. He was one of the ablest public servants in the country. With some hereditary claim to distinction, he had been marked out from the very

commencement of his career, no less by a favourable concurrence of external circumstances than by his own inherent qualifications, for the highest official success. No young civilian in his novitiate ever carried upon him so clearly and unmistakably the stamp of the embryo Councillor, as John Grant. In some respects this was a misfortune to him. His course was too easy. He had found his way; he had not been compelled to make it. He had not been jostled by the crowd; he had seen little or none of the rough work of Indian administration or Indian diplomacy. It had been his lot, as it had been his choice, to spend the greater part of his official life in close connection with the Head-Quarters of the Government; and, therefore, his opportunities of independent action had been few; his personal acquaintance with the country and the people was not extensive; and his work had been chiefly upon paper. But as a member of a powerful bureaucracy his value was conspicuous. Quick in the mastery of facts, clear and precise in their analytical arrangement, and gifted with more than common powers of expression, he was admirably fitted to discharge the duties of the Secretariat. He was a dead hand at a report; and if Government were perplexed by any difficult questions, involving a tangled mass of disordered financial accounts, or a great conflict of authority mystifying the truth, he was the man of all others to unravel the intricate or to elucidate the obscure. Comparatively young in years, but ripe in bureaucratic experience, he entered the Supreme Council towards the close of Lord Dalhousie's administration. But he had sat long enough at the Board to establish his independence. He expressed his opinions freely and fearlessly; and his minutes, when minute-writing was in vogue, were commonly the best State papers recorded by the Government of the day. Closely reasoned, forcibly expressed, with here and there touches of quiet humour or subdued sarcasm, they cut through any sophistries put forth by his colleagues, with sharp incisive logic, and clearly stated the points at issue without disguises and evasions. On the whole, he was a man of large and liberal views, the natural manifestations of which were, perhaps, somewhat straitened by an acquired official reserve, and no one questioned the honesty of his intentions or the integrity of his life.

Barnes Peacock.

Mr. Barnes Peacock was the fourth, and, as is commonly called, the "Law Member" of Council. An English lawyer, appointed to aid the great work of Indian

legislation, he was a member of the Executive rather by sufferance than by right. In a limited sense, he was supposed to represent the popular element in the Council. There was no very violent conflict of class interests in those days. But so far as such division existed at all, he was regarded as the exponent of the views of the non-official Englishman and of the Europeanised Natives of the large towns, whose interests are bound up with our own. For the institution of the Company he was believed to have no respect, and for the exclusive system of Government by the Company's servants no toleration. He had a clear head, an acute understanding, but by no means a large mind. Assiduous in the work of law-making, he was the very soul of the Legislative Council; and had he confined his efforts to the work of moulding into draft-acts the ideas of other men, he would have been an invaluable public servant. But he sometimes went beyond this; and, when he did so, he commonly went wrong. For knowing little of the people of India, and having only thoroughly English notions of philanthropic reforms and legislative beneficences, he would have taught the people better manners with a rapidity for which they were not prepared, if he had unrestrainedly followed out his own ideas of social improvement. Indeed, he had already threatened to limit the polygamies of the Natives of India, and, doubtless, had a draft-act for the purpose on the legislative anvil, when circumstances arrested his career of reform. But, although it was in the legislative department that his especial strength lay, he did not confine himself to it. He grappled manfully with all the varied details of the general administration. There were times when his legal penetration was of service in the disentanglement of knotty questions of executive government, and he sometimes recorded minutes distinguished by no common powers of special pleading. But, on the whole, this laborious addiction to business was an encumbrance and an embarrassment to the Ministry; and Lord Canning had soon reason to complain of the conscientious excesses of his colleague. A general disinclination to take anything for granted impeded the progress of business; and the Governor-General, not without a feeling of admiration for a defect that had its root in honesty of purpose, endeavoured, and with good success, to wean the law member from his habit of mastering details which he was not expected to understand, and keeping back business which it was desirable to dispose of, whilst he was working up the past history of a

Native State, or calculating grain-bags in a commissariat account. There must have been some inward promptings of self-knowledge in Canning's own mind to assure him that this laborious conscientiousness was a part of his own nature; but he felt, at the same time, that his larger scope of responsibility demanded from him a larger scope of action, and that what was right in the Governor-General was not therefore right in his departmental colleague.

Such were the fellow-labourers with whom Lord Canning was now about to prosecute the work of Government. On the whole, the Council was not badly constituted for ordinary purposes of administration in quiet times. It contained, indeed, many of the essential elements of a good Board. What it most wanted was military knowledge; for General Low, though an old soldier of the Madras Army, had seen more of the Court than of the Camp; and it was rather in the diplomacies of the Native States than in the conduct of warlike operations, or in the details of military administration, that he had earned, by hard service, the right to be accepted as an authority.* It was a constitutional fiction that, in an Indian Council, the necessary amount of military knowledge was supplied in the person of the Commander-in-Chief, who had a seat in it. The seat, though legally occupied, was for the most part practically empty, for duty might not, and inclination did not, keep the military chief at the Head-Quarters of the Civil Government. But it happened that, when Lord Canning arrived in India, he found General Anson in Calcutta. And it was a pleasure to him to see in the Indian capital a face that had been familiar to him in the English.

General Anson.

The appointment of the Honourable George Anson to the chief command of the Indian Army took by surprise the English communities in the three Presidencies, who had seen his name only in the Racing Calendar, or in other records of the Turf. But there was one thing at least to be said in his favour: he was not an old man. It was not in the nature of things, after a long European peace, that good service should be found in the officers of the Queen's Army unaccompanied by the weight of years. But the scandal of imbecility had risen to such a height, the military world had

* Shortly after Lord Canning's arrival, General Low went to England, but returned at the commencement of the cold weather (1856-57).

grown so sick of infirmity in high places—of the blind, the lame, the deaf, the obesely plethoric—that they were prepared to welcome almost any one who could sit a horse, who could see from one end to the other of a regiment in line, and hear the report of a nine-pounder at a distance of a hundred yards. There was nothing to be said against George Anson on this score. He could hear and see; he could ride and walk. He was of a light spare figure, well framed for active exercise; and his aspect was that of a man who could "stand the climate." But with all men who first brave that climate in the maturity of life, there is a risk and an uncertainty; and appearances belied Anson's capabilities of resistance. During the hot weather and rainy season of 1856, the heats and damps of Bengal tried him severely; and Lord Canning more than once wrote home that his military colleague was reduced to a skeleton, and had lost all his bodily strength and all his buoyancy of spirit. But, at the same time, he spoke of the Chief as one who had many excellent points, both as an officer and as a man. The precise limits of authority vested in the chief civil and military functionaries are so ill defined, that, when the powers of both are combined in one individual, it is a mercy if he does not quarrel with himself. When they are divided, as is commonly the case, a conflict of authority is inevitable. And so at this time, the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief soon came into official collision; but it never grew into personal strife between Lord Canning and General Anson. The public prints hinted that there was a rupture between them; and the same story travelled homewards and penetrated Cannon-row. But the Civilian wrote, that though there had been some special points of difference between them, the temper of the Soldier was so charming, and he was so thoroughly a gentleman, that it was quite impossible to quarrel with him. The inevitable antagonism of official interests could not weaken the ties of personal regard; and when Anson, in the month of September, left Calcutta on a tour of military inspection in the Upper Provinces, he carried with him no kindlier wishes than those which attended him warm from the heart of the Governor-General.*

* What Lord Canning wrote about General Anson is so honourable to both that it is quite a pleasure to quote it. "We get on admirably together," wrote the Governor-General in June. "His temper is charming, and I know no one whom I should not be sorry to see substituted for him." And again,

in October: "I am not surprised at the report you mention that Anson and I do not get on well together, because such a rumour was current in Calcutta two or three months ago, and even found its way into the newspapers. I believe it originated in a difference between us on two points; one (of much interest to the Indian Army), the power of the Commander-in-Chief to withhold applications for furlough, transmitted through him to the Governor-General in Council; the other, an authority to exercise something very like a veto upon the Governor-General's selections of officers for civil and political service. Upon both of which I found it necessary to disallow his pretensions. But neither these disagreements, nor the report to which they gave rise, have for a moment caused any misunderstanding or reserve between us. It would be very difficult to quarrel with any one so imperturbably good-tempered, and so thoroughly a gentleman."—*MS. Correspondence.*

CHAPTER II.

WITH these colleagues in the Council Chamber, and with a staff of able, well-trained secretaries, of whom I shall speak hereafter, in the several Departments, the new Governor-General found the burden of his work, though it pressed heavily upon him, in no way galling or dispiriting. There are always small vexations and embarrassments; incidental details, that will not run smoothly in the administrative groove, but grind and grate and have a stubborn obstructiveness about them. But the great sum-total of the business before him wore an aspect cheerful and encouraging. There was tranquillity in India. Outwardly, it seemed that Lord Dalhousie had left only a heritage of Peace.

The Administration of Oudh.

Even in Oudh, just emerging from a revolution, there were external signs of general quietude; of contentment, or at least of submission; and of the satisfactory progress of the administration. But a new administrator was wanted. Outram had done his work. He had been selected to fill the office of Resident, and no man could have more becomingly represented British interests at a corrupt and profligate Court. In that capacity it had fallen to his lot to accomplish ministerially the revolution which had been decreed by the British Government. But it was work that sickened him; for although he believed that it was the duty of the Paramount State to rescue Oudh from the anarchy by which it had so long been rent, he was one whose political predilections were in favour of the maintenance of the Native States, and he knew that much wrong had been done to the Princes and Chiefs of India under the plea of promoting the interests of the people. When the Proclamation converted Oudh into a British province, the Resident became Chief Commissioner, and the superintendence of the administration was the work that then devolved upon him. But it was work that Outram was not now destined to perform. His health had broken down; the hot season was

coming on apace; and a voyage to England had been urgently pressed upon him by his medical advisers. So he sought permission to lay down the Portfolio for a while, and asked the Governor-General to appoint an officer to act for him in his absence.

It would have been comparatively easy to find a successor suited to the work, if the appointment to be disposed of had been a permanent one. But Lord Canning had to find a man able to conduct the administration at its most difficult stage, and yet willing to forsake other important work for the brief tenure of another's office. Outram said that there was one man in whom both the ability and the will were to be found. That man was Henry Ricketts, a Bengal civilian of high repute, whose appointment was pressed upon Lord Canning as the best that could be made. But Ricketts was wanted for other work. The authorities at home were clamouring for a reduction of expenditure; and as retrenchment, public or private, commonly begins in the wrong place, a revision of official salaries was to be one of the first efforts of our economy. So Mr. Ricketts had been specially appointed to furnish a Report on the best means of extracting from the officers of Government the same amount of good public service for a less amount of public money. Lord Canning shook his head doubtfully at the experiment; but Cannon-row was urgent, and nothing was to be suffered to interrupt the labours of the man who was to suggest the means of increasing the financial prosperity of the Company by sapping out the energies of those upon whom that prosperity mainly depended.

Question of succession.

Whilst Outram and the Governor-General were corresponding about this arrangement, another plan for the *temporary* administration of Oudh was suggesting itself; but it never became more than a suggestion. Ever since the dissolution of the Lahore Board, Sir Henry Lawrence had held office as chief of the Political Agency at Rajputáná. It was a post of honour and responsibility; but there was not in the work to be done enough to satisfy so ardent and so active a mind, and he had longed, during that great struggle before Sebastopol, which he had watched with eager interest from the beginning, to show, when all the departments were breaking down, what a rough-and-ready Indian Political might do to help an army floundering miserably in a strange land. But this field of adventure was closed against him. Peace was proclaimed: and Henry

Lawrence, who had studied well the history and the institutions of Oudh, and who had advocated the assumption of the government, but not the annexation of the province or the absorption of its revenues, thought that he might do some good by superintending the administration during the first year of our tenure. There were many interests to be dealt with in that conjuncture, which required a strong but a gentle hand to accommodate them to the great revolution that had been accomplished, and he felt some apprehension lest civilian-government, harsh and precise, should forthwith begin to systematise, in utter disregard of the institutions and usages of the country, and should strike at once for a flourishing balance-sheet. It was too little the fashion to sympathise with the fallen fortunes of men ruined by the dominant influence of the White Race. In the chivalrous benevolence of the outgoing Commissioner, Henry Lawrence had full confidence. The great-hearted compassion which Outram had shown for the Amírs of Sindh, proclaimed the mercy and justice of the man. But a civilian of the new school from the Regulation Provinces might bring with him a colder heart and a sharper practice, and might overbear all ancient rights and privileges in pursuit of the favourite theory of the Dead Level. Anxious to avert this, which he believed would be a calamity alike to the people of Oudh and to his own government, Henry Lawrence offered to serve, during the transition-period, in Outram's place; and the first misfortune that befell the ministry of Lord Canning was that the letter, conveying the proposal, arrived a little too late. A Commissioner had already been appointed.

The New Commissioner.

The choice had fallen on Mr. Coverley Jackson, a civilian from the North-West Provinces, an expert revenue officer, held in high esteem as a man of ability, but more than suspected of some infirmity of temper. Aware of this notorious failing, but not deeming it sufficient to disqualify one otherwise so well fitted for the post, Lord Canning accompanied his offer of the appointment with a few words of caution, frank but kindly, and Jackson in the same spirit received the admonition, assuring the Governor-General that it would be his earnest endeavour to conciliate the good feelings of all who might be officially connected with him, so far as might be consistent with the claims of the public service and the maintenance of the authority entrusted to him. But he did not accomplish this; and there is slight evidence

that he resolutely attempted it. It was an untoward occurrence that the man next in authority, and the one with whom the circumstances of the province brought him most frequently into official communication, was as little able to control his temper as Jackson himself. Mr. Martin Gubbins, of the Bengal Civil Service, was the Financial Commissioner. Upon him devolved the immediate superintendence of the revenue administration of our new territory, whilst Mr. Ommaney, of the same service, superintended the department of Justice. A man of rare intelligence and sagacity, eager and energetic, Martin Gubbins would have been a first-rate public servant, if his utility had not been marred by a contentious spirit. His angularities of temper were continually bringing him in collision with others, and his pertinacious self-assertion would not suffer him, when once entangled in a controversy, ever to detach himself from it. Of all men in the service he was the one least likely to work harmoniously with the Chief Commissioner. So it happened that, in a very short time, they were in a state of violent antagonism. Whether, in the first instance, Jackson overstrained his authority, and unwisely and unkindly expressed his displeasure in language calculated to excite irritation and resentment, or whether Gubbins was the first to display an insubordinate spirit, and to provoke the censure of his chief by the attempted usurpation of his powers, it is of little importance now to inquire. The sharp contention that grew up between them was soon made known to the Governor-General, who deplored and endeavoured to arrest it. How wisely and calmly he conveyed to the Commissioner an expression, less of his displeasure than of his regret, his correspondence pleasantly illustrated.* But no kindly counsel from Govern-

Jackson and Gubbins.

* Take, for example, the following: "Judging by my own experience, I should say that in dealing with public servants who have incurred blame, everything is to be gained by telling them their faults in unmistakable language, plainly and nakedly; but that one's purpose (their amendment) is rather defeated than otherwise by the use of terms that sting them, or amplify their offences to them unnecessarily—even though all be done within the strict limits of truth and fact. I believe that if a man has at bottom a sense of his duty, and is possessed of the feelings and temper of a gentleman, the more simply his error is put before him, and the more plain and quiet the reproof, the better chance there is of his correcting himself readily and willingly, and that if we wish to get work done hereafter out of some one whom

ment House could smooth down the asperities of Jackson's temper. As time advanced, the feud between him and Gubbins grew more bitter and more irreconcilable. In India, a paper war once commenced lasts out many a military campaign. There is something so exciting, so absorbing in it, that even the best public servants sometimes forget the public interests whilst they are wasting their time and expending their energies in personal conflicts and criminations. Had Coverley Jackson taken half as much pains to see that the pledges of the British Government were fulfilled, and the annexation of Oudh rendered as little ruinous as possible to all the chief people of the province, as he did to convict his subordinates of official misdemeanours, it would have been better both for his own character and for the character of the nation. But whilst Jackson and Gubbins were in keen contention with each other, covering reams of paper with their charges and counter-charges and their vehement self-assertions, the generous nature of the Governor-General was grieved by complaints and remonstrances from the King, who declared, or suffered it to be declared for him, that the English officers in Lakhnao were inflicting grievous wrongs and indignities upon him and upon his family, seizing or destroying his property, and humiliating the members and dependents of his House.

Movements of the ex-King.

It has been shown that Wajid Ali, when he saw that all hope of saving his dominions from the great white hand that had been laid upon them had utterly gone from him, had talked about travelling to England and laying his sorrows at the foot of the Throne. But, in truth, travelling to England, or to any other place, was a thing rather to be whined about than to be done, by one so destitute of all activities, physical and mental, and it was almost certain that he would hitch somewhere; not improbably at the first stage. And so he did. Halting not far from Lakhnao, the King awaited the on-coming of his minister, Ali Nakí Khan, a man not wanting in activities of any kind, who had been detained at the capital to aid in the "transfer of the Government," out of which he had been ousted. But after a

it is necessary to rebuke, we ought to give him as little excuse as possible (he will too often find it where it is not given) for feeling irritated against ourselves."—*Lord Canning to Mr. Coverley Jackson, July* 7, 1856.—*MS. Correspondence.*

the voyage. As to the Governor-General, all he could say was, "Let them go," pitying the East India Company, thus compelled to take such troublesome visitors, but claiming for them kindly and courteous treatment at the hands of the magnates of Leadenhall. And so those representatives of the exploded kingship of Oudh went westward, with vague but extensive ideas of a recovery past looking for on this side of eternity, buoyed up and encouraged by men who well knew the hopelessness of the endeavour. The "case" was miserably mismanaged. There was much internal strife, and scarcely an attempt to strike out against the common foe. The so-called "Mission" went to pieces and rotted piecemeal. Not merely waste of treasure was there, but waste of life. The Queen-Mother and the Prince-General died, and were buried in the great cemetery of Père la Chaise. The Heir-Apparent, money-bound and helpless, threw himself upon the mercy of the enemy, borrowed from them half a lakh of rupees, and was carried homewards, somewhat dazed and bewildered as to the upshot or no upshot of the whole affair, but with a prevailing sense of escape and relief that it was all over. And the rest of the luckless embassy went at last, leaving behind them some scum of official trouble and mishap, and some legal perplexities not readily soluble by any "perfection of human reason" known in our English courts.

Grievance of the ex-King.

Meanwhile, in the name of the King himself, ministerial activities had not been wanting in India to make substantial grievance, not so much of the thing done (for that was left to the "Mission") as of the manner of doing it, which had not been all right. In the Humanities, wherein is included the great art of letting down easily, good to be learnt alike by Men and by Governments, we had not taken first-class honours. Not without some reddenings of shame is it to be recorded that the wrongs inflicted upon the Princes of India in the shape of territorial dispossessions and titular extinctions had been sometimes supplemented by lesser wrongs, more grievous to bear upon the one side and less to be justified on the other. For there is some dignity in great wrong, doing or suffering; and a persuasion, in one case, not without sincerity at the bottom, that wrong is right. But look at the matter in what light we may, it can be nothing but miserable wrong to make these dispossessions and extinctions, which may be for the national good, the forerunners of per-

sonal distresses and humiliations to individuals thus dispossessed and extinguished. Yet men and, redder shame still, feeble Zenana-bred women had brought this charge against the strong Government of the British, before the kingdom of Oudh was marked for extinction; and now again the same complaint of supplemental cruelties and indignities, more galling than the one great wrong itself, went up from Wajid Ali, or was uttered in his name. It was charged against us that our officers had turned the stately palaces of Lakhnao into stalls and kennels, that delicate women, the daughters or the companions of kings, had been sent adrift, homeless and helpless, that treasure-houses had been violently broken open and despoiled, that the private property of the royal family had been sent to the hammer, and that other vile things had been done very humiliating to the King's people, but far more disgraceful to our own.

Not only so disgraceful, but so injurious to us, so great a blunder, indeed, would such conduct have been, that all who had any hope of the restoration of the Oudh monarchy must have devoutly wished the story to be true. There were those who had such hope. How could it be hopeless, when it was remembered that the Sipáhi Army of the Company was full of men whose homes were in Oudh; when it was believed that the great flood of English rule was sweeping away all existing interests, and destroying all the influential classes alike in the great towns and in the rural districts? The ministers and courtiers of the King of Oudh were at large in Calcutta and the neighbourhood, and might journey whithersoever they pleased. Vast fields of intrigue were open before them. The times were propitious. It was plain that there was a feeling of inquietude in the native mind, and that fear had engendered discontent. It was certain that the British Government were weak, for the country was stripped of European troops. The good day might yet come. Meanwhile, it might be something to spread abroad, truly or falsely, a story to the effect that the English, adding insult to injury, had cruelly humiliated all the members of the Oudh family left behind in Lakhnao.

In these stories of official cruelty Canning had small faith. But the honour of his Government demanded that they should be inquired into and contradicted, and he urged the Chief Commissioner at once to investigate and report upon the charges put forth by the creatures of the King. But Jackson,

full of his own wrongs, failed to see the importance of the task assigned to him, and his answers were unsatisfactory and apparently evasive. Privately as well as publicly he was urged by the Governor-General to address himself seriously to the work of effacing from the nation the dishonour with which the dependents of the old Court of Lakhnao had endeavoured to besmear the British name. But the result was not what Lord Canning had sought, not what he had expected. So at last, bitterly grieved and disappointed by the manner in which his representative had dealt with a subject, at once of so delicate and so important a nature, the Governor-General thus becomingly poured forth his indignation: "I will not conceal from you," he wrote to Mr. Jackson, "my disappointment at the manner in which from first to last you have treated this matter. Instead of enabling the Government to answer distinctly and categorically every complaint which the King has preferred, you have passed over unnoticed some upon which you must have known that the Government were without materials for reply. Upon placing your answers, now that all have been received, side by side with the King's letters, I find myself quite unable to say whether any buildings such as he describes have been pulled down, and if so, why?—although one building, the Jelwa Khána, had been especially mentioned to the King, as in course of demolition—whether dogs or horses have been quartered in the Chatar Manzil, and especially whether a stoppage of the allowances to the King's descendants has been threatened, a statement to this effect being pointedly made in the King's letter of the 14th of September. You tell me that you have delayed your answers in order that they may be more complete. I can hardly think, therefore, that these matters have escaped you, and yet I do not know how otherwise to account for their being passed by. Be this as it may, the result of your course of proceeding is that the Governor-General is placed in an unbecoming, not to say humiliating position towards the King of Oudh. The King brings complaints, which, whether true or false, are plain enough against the officers of Government, and the Governor-General, after assuring the King that as soon as reference shall have been made to the Chief Commissioner, satisfactory explanation shall be given, and relying, as he has a right to do, that that officer will obey his instructions and do his duty, finds himself altogether mistaken, and defeated upon

October 19, 1856.

points which, however unworthy of notice they may appear to the Chief Commissioner at Lakhnao, cannot be slurred over by the Government in Calcutta. It matters nothing that these charges are instigated by disreputable hangers-on of the King, or that they are wholly or partly untrue, or even impossible. There they are in black and white, and they must be answered. It is surprising to me that you should have failed to appreciate the necessity."

And it was surprising; but Coverley Jackson, at that time, could scarcely appreciate any necessity save that of riding roughshod over Gubbins and Ommaney, and keeping them down to the right subordinate level. How far these charges of cruel indifference to the feelings of the Oudh family were true, to what extent the dependents of the late King were wronged and humiliated and the nobles of the land despoiled and depressed; how, indeed, the revolution affected all existing interests, are subjects reserved for future inquiry. It would have been well if the Chief Commissioner had done as much to mollify these poor people as to exasperate his own colleagues. But the temper of the man was to the last degree arbitrary and exacting, and Lord Canning, though with admirable patience and moderation he strove to control the excesses of his agent, could not hold them in check. Pointing to the great exemplar of John Lawrence, the Oudh administration having been constructed on the Panjábi model, he showed that the reins of government might be held with a firm and vigorous hand by one not grasping at all departmental authority. But these kindly teachings were in vain. The old strife continued. Striking with one hand at Gubbins, and with the other at Ommaney, the Chief Commissioner was continually in an attitude of offence; and the administration was likely to be wrecked altogether upon the lee-shore of these internal contentions. So, at last, the Governor-General was forced upon the conviction that he had selected the wrong man to preside in Oudh, and that the sooner he could be removed from it the better for the province.

The readiest means of effecting this, without any public scandal or any recorded reproach injurious to Jackson's career, was by the restoration of James Outram to the post which the civilian had been holding for him. Very unfit, doubtless, was the "officiating Chief Commissioner" for that post; but he had done good service to the State, he had some commendable points

of character, and even at the bottom of his proved incapacity for this particular office there might be nothing worse than a distempered zeal. So Lord Canning, in the exercise of what is called a "sound discretion," as well as in obedience to the dictates of a kind heart, sought to accomplish the end in view by a return to the *status ante* in the natural order of things, rather than by any violent supersession of his unfortunate nominee. It was doubly a source, therefore, of satisfaction to him to learn that Outram, whose shattered health at the time of his departure in the spring had excited sad forebodings in the mind of the Governor-General, now in the autumn declared himself convalescent and about to return to his work. But the work, the very thought of which had breathed into the veins of the soldier-statesman new health, and revived all his prostrate activities, was not administrative business in Oudh. It was altogether work of another kind and in another place, far enough away from the scene of all his former endeavours; work the account of which must be prefaced by some historical explanations.

The rupture with Persia.

Scarcely had Lord Canning taken his place in Government House, when the question of a war with Persia began to assume portentous dimensions. Truly, it was not his concern. Ever since the days when, nearly half a century before, there had been a strange mad scramble for diplomatic supremacy in Persia between the delegates of the Governor-General and of the Court of St. James's, the position of the Government of India towards our Persian Mission and our Persian policy had been very indistinctly defined. The financial responsibility of the Company had been at all times assumed, and the executive assistance of the Indian Government had been called for, when our relations with that perfidious Court had been beset with difficulties beyond the reach of diplomatic address. But the political control had been vested in the Imperial Government, as represented by the Foreign Office;* and the officers of the Mission had been nominated by the Crown. Affairs were still in this state when Lord Canning assumed the Government of India, and found that Great Britain

* Except during a brief interval; that is, between the years 1826 and 1835, when the King's Government delegated partially the management of affairs to the Governor-General, only to resume it wholly again.

was rapidly drifting into a war with Persia, which it would be his duty to direct, and the resources for which must be supplied from the country under his charge.

Herat.

The difficulties, which now seemed to render war inevitable, were chronic difficulties, which were fast precipitating an acute attack of disease. They were an after-growth of the great convulsion of 1838, which had culminated in the war in Afghanistan. We had tried to forget that hated country; but there was a Nemesis that forbade oblivion. It was an article of our political faith that Herat must be an independent principality, and we clung to it as if the very salvation of our Indian Empire depended on the maintenance of this doctrine. But there was nothing in the whole range of Eastern politics so certain to engender continual tribulation, and at last to compel us to apostatise in despair. The independence of Herat was a shadowy idea; it never could be a substantial reality. With an Army of Occupation in Afghanistan, and with British officers freely disbursing British gold at the "gate of India," we had for awhile maintained the outward independence of the principality under Shah Kámrán of the Saduzai House of Kábul; but even then the minister, Yar Muhammad, was continually declaring that his heart was with Iran, and threatening to throw himself into the arms of the Persian King. When the British Army had evacuated Afghanistan, the bold, unscrupulous minister, having soon relieved himself of the nominal sovereignty of the Saduzai, began to rule the country on his own account. And he ruled it well: that is, he ruled it with vigour; and for some ten years, by astute diplomacy, the soul of which was a system of small concessions to Persia, which soothed her pride and averted great demands, he governed the principality in peace, and maintained its nominal integrity. But his son, Sai'ud Muhammad, who succeeded him, had none of the essentials of a great ruler. Plentifully endowed with his father's wickedness, he lacked all his father's vigour. Treacherous and unscrupulous, but feeble in the extreme, he was ready, on the first appearance of danger, to become a creature of the Persian Court. Persia eagerly seized the opportunity; and again England appeared upon the scene.

In the course of 1852, a Persian Army marched upon Herat. Not, indeed, in open defiance; not with any avowed object of conquest; but nominally, as a powerful ally, to perform an office of friendship. On the death of Yar Muhammad the affairs

of the principality had fallen into confusion, and the Persian Army went forth with the benevolent design of restoring them to order and prosperity. But the mask was soon thrown aside. The real object of the expedition proclaimed itself. Herat was declared to be an appendage of the Persian monarchy. This was not to be borne. To maintain the independence of Herat, England a few years before had been prepared to send her legions to the gates of the city. And now Persia was destroying it by a trick. So, fortified by instructions from Downing-street, the British minister resisted the outrage. On pain of an entire forfeiture of the friendship of Great Britain, the Persian Government were called upon to withdraw their army, and to enter into a solemn covenant binding them to recognise and respect the independence of Herat. There were then the usual displays of trickery and evasiveness; but overawed at last by the resolute bearing of the British minister, the required pledge was given, and Persia bound herself to acknowledge the independence which she was so eager to crush. But she was sorely disturbed and irritated by our interference with her schemes of ambition; and thenceforth the British Mission became an object of dislike and suspicion at Teheran; and a rupture between the two Courts was only a question of time.

The war in the Crimea delayed—it did not avert—the inevitable crisis. The genius of Persia had then free scope for exercise, and turned to the best account its opportunities of double-dealing. Waiting the sentence of the great Judge of Battles, she coquetted both with Russia and with the Allies, and was ready to sell her good offices to the stronger party, or in a time of uncertainty to the higher bidder. But when the war ceased, her importance was gone; she had not been able to turn her position to account during the day of strife, and when peace dawned again upon Europe, she tried in vain to be admitted to the great International Council, which made the work of reconciliation complete. Disappointed and offended, perhaps, not thinking much of our boasted victory, for Russia had been successful in Asiatic Turkey, and Persia knew less about Sebastopol than about Kars, she could see no profit in the English alliance. The minister who then directed her affairs had no feeling of affection for the British representative at her Court. A strong personal prejudice, therefore, came in to aggravate the national antipathy; and before the end of 1855, the Mission had been so grievously insulted that Mr. Murray

trick of Persia to justify her own acts of aggression by a reference to some alleged danger and the necessity of self-preservation. So, seeing in the internal state of Herat an encouraging opportunity, and in the movements of Dost Muhammad a plausible pretext for evading their obligations, the Government of the Shah tore the convention of 1853 into shreds, and again marched an army upon Herat. But it met with no welcome there. Alarmed by the movements of the Kábul Amir, and threatened with a counter-revolution at home, the nominal ruler of Herat had turned towards the Persians for assistance, but when he found that the chief people of the place were opposed to such an alliance, and that a strong national Suni-ism prevailed among them, he hoisted British colours and invited Dost Muhammad to come to his aid. The characteristic bad faith of the Saduzai Princes was conspicuous in this wretched man. His own people could not trust him. The Persians were investing the place, and it was feared that Yusuf Khan would betray the city into their hands. It was easy, therefore, to raise a party against him. So Ísa Khan, the Deputy or Lieutenant-Governor of the place, caused him to be seized, and sent him a prisoner into the enemy's camp, with a letter declaring that he was of no use in Herat, and that the Persians might do with him as they liked.

To this point events had progressed when Lord Canning was called upon to address himself seriously to the consideration of the troubled politics of Central Asia. To the new Governor-General these complications were a source of no common anxiety, for he could see clearly that England was drifting into war, and that, however little he might have to do with it in its origin and conception, its execution would be entrusted to him. There was a bitter flavour about the whole affair that was distasteful in the extreme to the Governor-General. "My hope of an accommodation," he wrote to the President in August, "has almost died out, and I contemplate the prospect of the inglorious and costly operations which lie before us with more disgust than I can express."* He had gone out, as others had gone before him, with an avowed and a sincere desire for peace; but warned by their cruel disappointments, he had laid fast hold in India of the resolution which he had formed in England, and he was not by any adverse or any alluring cir-

* Lord Canning to Mr. Vernon Smith, August 8, 1856.—*MS.*

cumstances to be driven or enticed into unnecessary war. "Do not," he said, "be afraid of my being unduly hasty to punish Persia. Unless the Shah should steam up the Húglí, with Murray swinging at his yard-arm, I hope that we shall be able to keep the peace until your instructions arrive."* And he was anxious to avoid, not only aggressive measures from the side of India, but any diplomatic entanglements that might at some future time be a cause of perplexity to his Government. The politics of Central Asia he regarded with extreme aversion. Remembering the fearful lessons of the Past, he determined not, of his own free will, to send a single man into Afghanistan; and he resisted the promptings of Ministers at home, when it was suggested to him somewhat prematurely that seasonable donatives might convert Dost Muhammad into an effective ally, willing and ready to apply a blister from the side of Kandahar And when, at a later period, instructions came from England to supply the Amir with arms and money, and authority was given to the Governor-General to send a British Mission to Herat, he shrunk from acting upon the latter suggestion. "I do not purpose," he wrote, "to use the permission to send British officers to Herat. We know much too little of things there to justify this step, which would for certain be full of risk. The place is hard pressed by famine as well as by the enemy. Our officers could take with them no relief nor any promise of it, for we are not going to march to Herat ourselves, and we cannot afford to promise on the faith of the Amir's performances." August, 1856.

But unwilling as was Lord Canning to adopt the measures, to which reference was made in these letters, he could not maintain this policy of non-interference in Afghanistan after the Home Government had determined upon the declaration of war against Persia. The year had scarcely dawned, when such an upshot began to be discussed as something of no very remote reality, and before Parliament had broken up and her Majesty's Ministers had dispersed for the autumn, the equipment of an expedition to the Persian Gulf had been decreed. The orders from Home were that all preparations should be made for the despatch of a military and naval expedition from Bombay to the Persian Gulf; but that pending the progress of some further diplomacies in Europe, which might end in concessions, no

* Lord Canning to Mr. Vernon Smith, April 22, 1856.—*MS.*

actual start should be made. It was not until the end of September that Her Majesty's Government, through the legal channel of the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, sent out final instructions for the sailing of the expedition and the commencement of the war.* On the evening of the last day of October, these instructions reached the Governor-General in Calcutta, and on the following morning—day of evil omen, for eighteen years before it had delivered itself of the sad Afghan manifesto—a proclamation of war was issued. On the same day it was sent to Lord Elphinstone at Bombay, and the General in command was charged with instructions respecting the conduct of the expedition, and ordered straightway to begin.

November 1st.

The question of the command of the expedition had been one which Lord Canning by no means found it easy to solve. Many names had been suggested to him, and among them that of General Windham—"Windham of the Redan"—who had performed feats of gallantry in the Crimea, and was ready for hard service in any part of the world. But Lord Canning, whilst thoroughly appreciating Windham's gallant services in the field, and knowing well that his appointment would be "popular in England," saw that there were strong reasons against it. "In a mixed force of Queen's and Company's troops," he said, "it is of great importance that there should be a willing and earnest co-operation of all subordinate officers with the Commander, and it is more difficult to obtain this for a stranger than for one who is known. The Commander should have some acquaintance with the Indian Army, if he has to lead a large force of it into an unknown and difficult country. He should know something of its constitution, temper, and details—of what it can and what it

The question of command.

* The orders were, under date July 22, 1856, that measures were to be "immediately taken at Bombay for the preparation of an expedition sufficiently powerful to occupy the island of Karak in the Persian Gulf, and the district of Bushir on the mainland; but the expedition is not to sail until further orders shall have been received from this country." On the 26th of September the Secret Committee forwarded to Lord Canning copies of Lord Clarendon's instructions to the British Consuls in Persia to withdraw from that country, and of a letter addressed by his Lordship to the Commissioners for the Affairs of India, "requiring that the expedition, which will have been prepared, under instructions of the 22nd of July, shall, as soon as it can be completed, proceed to its destination in the Persian Gulf."

cannot do. This would not be the case with Windham, fresh landed from England." And it is not to be doubted that he was right. If the force had been on a larger scale, the Commander-in-Chief himself might perhaps have been placed at its head; but Lord Canning, with the highest possible opinion of General Anson's fine temper, of the assiduity with which he had addressed himself to the business of his high office, and the ability with which he had mastered its details, had still some misgivings with respect to his prejudices, and doubted whether he had not formed certain conclusions unjust to the Company's Army.

On the whole, it was better, in any circumstances, that an Indian officer should command; and Lord Canning was resolute that such should be the arrangement. But he had been somewhat perplexed at first as to the choice to be made, and he had consulted Sir John Lawrence, as the man of all others who, not being by profession a soldier, had the finest soldierly instincts and the keenest appreciation of the essential qualities demanded for the command of such an expedition. What the great Panjábi administrator said in reply was an utterance of good sense and good feeling, the fulness of which, however, was not then as discernible as it now is, viewed by the light of intervening history. About the answer to be given there was no doubt; but clearly there was some difficulty. For the man whom of all men in India he held to be best fitted for the work in hand was his own brother, Sir Henry Lawrence; and if he could go, accompanied by Colonel Sydney Cotton, all would be well. "Cotton," wrote John Lawrence to the Governor-General, "is one of the best officers I have seen in India. He is a thorough soldier, loves his profession, and has considerable administrative talent. Of all the officers I have noted, with one exception, Sydney Cotton is the best." But his experiences, great as they were, had not lain in the line of diplomatic action, and, if it were necessary, as Lawrence believed, to unite the political and the military authority in the same person, Cotton, good soldier as he was, might clearly lack some of the essential qualifications for the double office. So John Lawrence proceeded to say: "The man whom I would name for the command of such an expedition is my brother Henry. I can assure your lordship that I am not in the slightest degree biased in his favour. He has seen a good deal of service, having been in the first Burmese

Henry Lawrence.

war, in the second Afghan war, and in both the Satlaj campaigns. He is not an officer of much practical knowledge, except in his own branch (the Artillery), and he is not fond of details. But, on the other hand, he has great natural ability, immense force of character, is very popular in his service, has large political acumen, and much administrative ability. I do not think that there is a military man in India who is his equal in these points. He is also in possession of his full vigour, both of mind and body, and there is not a good soldier of the Bengal Army in the Panjáb, or perhaps in Upper India, but would volunteer to serve under him. With him as the Commander, and Sydney Cotton as the Second-in-Command, the arrangement would be complete. Cotton is master of all technical details of every arm of the service, and devotes his entire energies and thoughts to the welfare of his soldiers."

All this might have been misunderstood; and a little man, in such a case, would perhaps have hesitated to recommend his brother; but John Lawrence knew that the advice was good, and that he was incapable of offering it if it had not been. "If I know myself," he wrote, "I would revolt against such conduct." But though strong in the conviction that of all men living Henry Lawrence was the best suited to the work in hand, he was loud in his praise of other good officers, and had various plans to recommend, any one of which might have a successful issue. If Sydney Cotton were sent in command, it would be well to associate with him such an officer as Herbert Edwardes, in the character of political adviser. "But, in such matters," said John Lawrence, "unity in council and action is of the highest importance, and a commander who unites the military and political functions is most desirable. If your lordship does not take my brother, and Outram is available, I would be inclined to recommend him. I never met this officer; but he has a high reputation." And John Jacob, as having much military ability and considerable political experience, was a man not to be overlooked in the account of available capacity for such an enterprise.

But not only in Calcutta and in the Panjáb was this question of the command of the expedition being considered. It was well pondered at Bombay and in England, taking a shape eventually to overrule all other decisions. The expedition was to sail from Bombay, and all the arrangements for its organisation and equipment were proceeding there. Lord

Elphinstone was Governor of that Presidency. Twenty years before he had been Governor of Madras. At that time he was young, and not so serious and sedate as some people thought the head of a Government ought to be. "We want a Governor," it was said, somewhat bitterly, "and they send us a Guardsman; we want a statesman, and they send us a dancer." But he had ripened into what these people wanted, and now with a higher sense of the responsibilities of office, with a keener pleasure in his work, and a statesmanlike assiduity, for which the companions of his youth had not given him credit, he was, a second time, administering the affairs of an Indian Presidency, and busying himself with our external relations. The troops to be despatched, in the first instance, to the Persian Gulf were mainly Bombay troops, and it seemed fitting that the choice of a Commander should be made from the Bombay Army. If under stress of circumstance the war should assume more important dimensions, and the military force be proportionably extended, another selection might be made. But meanwhile, Elphinstone was requested to name some officer attached to his own Presidency, in whom the troops of all arms would have common confidence. So he named General Stalker, not without a pang of regret that he could not select Colonel Hancock—Hancock, the Adjutant-General of the Bombay Army—whom ill-health was driving to England. Stalker was the senior of the available officers, so there were no heart-burnings from supersession; he had seen much service, he was experienced in command, and it was believed that the appointment would be both a popular and a safe one. "I hear favourable accounts of his good sense and temper," said Lord Canning; "and that is what is wanted for the service before him, which will require more of patient and enduring than of brilliant qualities."

Lord Elphinstone.

So General Stalker was appointed to the command of the expedition to the Persian Gulf. But whilst these and other arrangements were being made in India, in the belief that ere long they would be merged into others of a more comprehensive character, the question of the chief command was being solved in England in a manner hardly anticipated by the Governor-General. In the month of May he had taken leave of Sir James Outram, with painful misgivings raised in his mind by the sight of the General's shattered frame and feeble bearing. He had suspected that

James Outram.

the mischief was far greater than Outram himself acknowledged or believed, and thought that years must elapse before he would be fit again for active service. And so thought all his friends in England. He appeared among them as the wreck only of the strong man who had left them a short time before; and they grieved to see the too visible signs of weakness and suffering which every look and gesture afforded. The summer faded into autumn; but there was little change for the better apparent in his outer aspect, when suddenly they were startled by the announcement that he was about forthwith to proceed to the Persian Gulf and take command of the expedition.

Nobody knew, nobody knows, how it happened that suddenly, in this conjuncture, James Outram shook off the incumbrances of disease, rose up from the prostration of the sick-room, and stood erect, active, robust before the world with the harness of war on his back. It was the autumnal season, when men scatter and disperse themselves in strange places, and elude in a vagrant life the rumours of the distant world; so there were many friends who, having left him at the summer's close a feeble invalid, were struck with a strange surprise when, returned or returning homewards, they were met by the news that Outram had gone or was going to Persia to take command of the invading force. The wonder soon gave place to delight; for they knew that though he was moved by strong ambitions, there was ever within him a sense of duty still stronger, and that on no account would he jeopardise the interests of the State by taking upon himself responsibilities which he had not full assurance in his inmost self of his ample competence to discharge. And so it was. The sound of the distant strife had rekindled all his smouldering energies. There was work to be done, and he felt that he could do it. On the pleasant Brighton esplanade, sauntering along meditative, or perhaps in the stimulating companionship of a stalwart friend and high functionary, the Chairman of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, Master of Masters, new hopes were wafted upon him with the sea-breezes, and his step grew firmer, his carriage more erect, as with strong assurance of support from Leadenhall-street, he resolved to tender his services to her Majesty's Government for employment in Persia with a joint military and diplomatic command.

Colonel Sykes.

This was at the beginning of the last week of October. On the 26th he wrote to Lord Canning that he purposed returning

to India by the mail of the 20th of December, "having perfectly recovered from the illness which drove him home." And he added, "In the supposition that I may be more usefully employed with the army about to proceed to Persia than necessary to your lordship in Oudh, where everything is progressing so satisfactorily, I have offered my services to the President (of the Board of Control), should it be deemed advisable to entrust to me diplomatic powers in conjunction with the military command, and I believe that, should your lordship be disposed so to employ me, the home authorities would not object. In that case your lordship's commands would meet me at Aden, whence I would at once proceed to Bombay." *

This letter reached Calcutta on the 2nd December. By the outgoing mail of the 8th, Lord Canning wrote to Outram at Aden, rejoicing in his complete recovery, "on every account, public and private," but questioning the policy of the Persian appointment. The expedition, he said, was not likely to increase in magnitude; it was not probable that there would be any operations beyond the seaboard during the winter, or that any diplomatic action would be taken to call for the employment of a high political functionary; if, indeed, overtures were to be made, they would most probably be addressed through some friendly power to London; there would be little scope, therefore, for his services with the Persian expedition, and it would be better, therefore, that he should return to his old appointment. "Oudh is completely tranquil," wrote Lord Canning, "and generally prospering. Nevertheless, I shall be very glad to see you resume your command there." The fact was that the Administration was by this time plunged into such a hopeless condition of internecine strife, that the Governor-General could in no way see any outlet of escape from the perplexities besetting him except by the removal of Chief-Commissioner Jackson; and now here was the opportunity, for which he had been waiting, to accomplish this end in an easy natural manner, without any official scandal, or the infliction of any personal pain.

But it was not to be so accomplished. Before the end of November the question of Outram's command of the Persian

* So full was Outram at this time of the thought of his departure in December, and so eager for the advent of the happy day of release, that he dated this letter "December" instead of October.

expedition had been fully discussed in the English Cabinet. Downing-street had laid fast hold of the idea, and pronounced its full satisfaction with it. Her Majesty the Queen had stamped the commission with the seal of her approbation, and the public voice, with one accord, had proclaimed that a good thing had been done, and that the right man would soon be in the right place. That it was thus virtually settled, past recall, went out under the President's hand by the mail of the 26th of November, and greeted Lord Canning with the new year. In official language, however, of Court of Directors, or Secret Committee thereof, it took the shape not of an announcement of a thing done, but of a recommendation that it should be done; for it was substantially an interference with the prerogative of the Governor-General, and was to be softened down so as in no wise to give offence. But Lord Canning was not a man, in such a case, to raise a question of privilege, or, assured that it was, actually or presumedly, for the official good, to shoot out any porcupine-quills from his wounded official dignity. He took the interference in good part; thanked the Chairman for the delicacy with which it had been communicated, and promised to give Outram his best support. He had doubted, he said, whether Outram's health and strength would be sufficient to bear the burdens that would be imposed upon him. "But the Queen's Government," he continued, "and the Secret Committee have seen him in recovered health, and if they are satisfied that he is in a condition to undertake the labour and trial of such a command, without risk to the interest confided to him, I have no objection to make, nor any wish to shake myself clear of responsibility." And then, with a reference to a memorandum on the future conduct of the campaign which Outram had drawn up in England, the Governor-General added, "It is a pleasure to me to declare that I have been greatly struck by all that has proceeded from General Outram in regard to future operations in Persia. I think his plans excellent, prudent for the present, and capable of easy expansion hereafter, and the means which he proposes for carrying them out for the most part well suited. For everything that I have yet heard of his proposals he shall have my cordial support."

1857. Central-Asian Policy.

Whilst the first division of the expeditionary force under Stalker was commencing operations with good success in the Persian Gulf, the new year found Outram at Bombay superintending the despatch of the second.

But it was not only by these movements from the sea-board that an impression was now to be made on the fears of the Court of Teheran. Diplomacy was to do its work in the country which lay between India and Persia. Reluctant as he had been, in the earlier part of the year, to commit himself to any decided course of Central-Asian policy, Lord Canning now began to discern more clearly the benefits that might arise from a friendly alliance with the Amir of Kábul. There was no longer any chance of a pacific solution of our difficulties. War had been proclaimed. Herat had fallen. Dost Muhammad had put forth plentiful indications of a strong desire for an English alliance; and the English Government at home appeared to be not unwilling to meet his wishes. That some action must now be taken in that direction was certain. Already had arms and money been sent into Afghanistan; but with no specific undertaking on the one side or the other, and it appeared desirable to put the matter now upon a more secure and a more dignified footing than that of temporary shifts and expedients. But there were great diversities of opinion as to the shape which should be taken by British action in the Afghan countries. Lord Canning had always had at least one clear conception about the matter; that it was better to do little than to do much, and wise not to do that little a day sooner than was needed. The terrible lessons which had been burnt into us fifteen years before had lost none of their significance. The warning voice was still sounding in our ears; the saving hand was still beckoning us away from those gloomy passes. It could never again enter into our imaginations to conceive the idea of turning back the tide of Russo-Persian invasion by making war against the national will and the substantive Government of the Afghans. But the monitions of the Past did not stop there. They cautioned us against ever sending a single British regiment across the Afghan frontier. Neither the Princes nor the People of Afghanistan were to be trusted, if the memories of their wrongs were to be reawakened within them by the presence of that which had done them such grievous harm. So, although among the schemes which were discussed, and in some military quarters advocated, was the project of an auxiliary British force, acting in close alliance with the Afghans, it was never for a moment seriously entertained in the Council Chamber. But to assail Persia in some measure from that side, whilst we were operating upon the sea-

board; to recover Herat, and, at the same time, to occupy some of the littoral provinces of the Persian Empire; was doubtless to put enormous pressure upon the Shah, to hold him, as it were, in a vice, helpless and agonised, and to extort from him all that we might want. This, peradventure, might be done, by continuing to send British bayonets into Afghanistan, but without, as of old, British valour to wield them; so many thousands of stands of arms, not so many thousands of soldiers; and British money, lakhs upon lakhs, but no British hands to dispense it. In a word, if we could manage successfully to subsidise Dost Muhammad, and hold him, by the bonds of self-interest, to a friendly covenant, whereby whilst aiding us he would aid himself, we might bring the war much more rapidly to a conclusion than if no such alliance were formed.

Dost Muhammad.

But there were strong doubts of the good faith of Dost Muhammad. The wily old Amir, it was said, was waiting upon the shore of circumstance, willing to sail in the same boat with us, if tide and stream should be in our favour and a fair wind setting in for success. For some time there had been going on between the Governor-General of India and the Ruler of Kábul certain passages of diplomatic coquetry, which had resulted rather in a promise of a close alliance, a kind of indefinite betrothal, than in the actual accomplishment of the fact. We had condoned the offence committed by the Amir at the close of the last war in the Panjáb, when he had sent some of his best troops, in the uniforms of our own slaughtered soldiers, to aid the Sikhs in their efforts to expel us; and whilst Dalhousie was still the ruler of India, an engagement of general amity had been nego-

March 30, 1855.

tiated by John Lawrence on the one side, and Haidar Khan on the other, between the English and the Afghans. It was probably intended, with a forecast of the coming rupture with Persia, that this should in time be expanded into a more definite treaty with Dost Muhammad; and more than two years before the occasion actually arose, the subsidising of the Amir loomed in the distance.* It was an old idea. Mr.

* It was talked of, indeed, before the compact of 1855, but did not form a part of it. In 1854 (June 19), Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to the author: "I fancy that we shall have some sort of Treaty with Dost Muhammad, unless Lord Dalhousie overreach himself by too great anxiety and by agreeing to pay him a subsidy. If Persia attack Afghanistan the help we should give the latter should be by attacking Persia from the Gulf. We should not send

Henry Ellis had entertained it; Sir John M'Neill had entertained it;* and if Lord Auckland's Secretaries had allowed him to entertain it, it is probable that the events of which I am about to write would never have afforded me a subject of History. In an hour of miserable infatuation, we had played the perilous game of King-making, and had forced an unpopular pageant upon a reluctant people. Now, after bitter experience, we were reverting to the first conception of our diplomatists; but mild as comparatively the interference was, it was held by some great authorities to be wiser to leave Afghanistan and the Afghans altogether alone. In spite of the present benefit to be derived from applying in that quarter a blister to the side of Persia, it might be better to suffer the old Amir to make the most of the crisis after his own fashion. He would not fight our battles for us without substantial help; but he might fight his own, and there could be no time, for the extension of his dominion to Herat, so opportune as that which saw Persia entangled in a war with England. But Dost Muhammad had too clear a knowledge of the English, and Afghan cupidity was too strong within him, to suffer this gratuitous co operation. He knew that, if he waited, we should purchase his aid; so he magnified the difficulties of the march to Herat, talked of the deficiency of his resources, and otherwise pretended that he lacked strength for a successful enterprise without continuous pecuniary aid from the English. Whether, having received such assistance from us, he would render effectual service in return for it, seemed to some of our Indian statesmen extremely doubtful, for there was the lowest possible estimate in their minds of Afghan truth and Afghan honour. There was the fear that the old Amir would set an extravagant price on his services, and that by disappointing his expectations, if not scouting his pretensions, we might inopportunely excite his

a rupee or a man into Afghanistan. We should express readiness to forgive and forget, to cry quits in Afghan matters, and pledge ourselves to live as good neighbours in future; but there ought to be no interference beyond the passes, and no backing of one party or another."

* One passage in Sir John M'Neill's early correspondence I cannot help quoting. There is rare prescience in it: "Dost Muhammad Khan, with a little aid from us, could be put in possession of both Kandahar and Herat. I anxiously hope that aid will not be withheld. A loan of money would probably enable him to do this, and would give us a great hold upon him. . . . . Until Dost Muhammad or some other Afghan shall have got both Kandahar and Herat into his hands, our position here must continue to be a false one."

animosities against us. Some, indeed, thought that he looked eagerly to the conjuncture as one that might help him to realise his old day-dream, the recovery of Pesháwar. There was, in truth, no lack of sagacity in these anticipations; but, perhaps, at the bottom of them there lay too deep a distrust of the personal character of the Amir. He had, in all candour it must be admitted, too much reason to doubt the good faith of the English. He could fathom the depths of our selfishness as well as we could fathom the depths of his guile. In truth, there were causes of mutual suspicion; and little good was likely to come from the distant fencing of diplomatic correspondence. So at last it was resolved to test the sincerity of the Amir by inviting him to a conference on the frontier.

Herbert Edwardes.

At that time, Herbert Edwardes, he of whose glorious youthful impulses I have spoken in the first chapter of this work, was Commissioner of Pesháwar. He had grown, by good-service brevet, rather than by the slow process of regimental promotion, from Lieutenant to Lieutenant-Colonel. His career had been a prosperous one, and its prosperity was well deserved. The great reputation which he had gained as an ambitious subaltern, brought down upon him at one time a shower of small jealousies and detractions. He had been feasted and flattered in England, and there were some who, doubtless with a certain self-consciousness of what would be likely to flow from such adulations, said that his head was turned, and that he had been overrated. But one, the noble helpmate of a truly noble man, wrote to me at this time, as one, however, not doubting, for I had like faith, that Herbert Edwardes was one of Nature's true nobility, and that surely I should live to know it. It was right. Under the Lawrences, Henry and John, both of whom he dearly loved, he grew to be one of the main pillars of the Panjábi Administration; and now he was in charge of that part of the old dominions of Ranjit Singh which lay beyond the Indus; the Proconsulate of Pesháwar. Planted thus upon the frontier of Afghanistan, it was one of his special duties to watch the progress of events in that country, and duly to report upon them to the higher authorities. Of direct diplomatic action there had been little or none; but no one knew what a day might produce, and it was ever therefore among the responsibilities of the Pesháwar Commissioner to be well versed in the politics of Kábul, and

Honoria Lawrence.

prepared, in any conjuncture, to counsel the course to be taken by the British Government.

For some time there had been much to observe and much to report, and now a conjuncture had arisen, which seemed to require from us that we should act. Persia was doing all that could be done to enlist the sympathies of Central Asia on her side, even in the far-off regions of Bokhára and Kokhand, by sending abroad, as a proof of the dangers of English friendship, copies of the pro-Christian Firman of the Sultan, which had been issued at the close of the Russian war. It was fortunate, therefore, that at this time the political animosities of the Afghans were strongly excited against the Persians, for, perhaps, under such pressure, the chronic sectarian jealousies which kept the two nations apart might for a while have been merged in a common religious hatred of the Faringhis. A very little done, or left undone on our part, to offend the old Amir, might have lost to us for ever the only serviceable Muhammadan alliance that could have availed us in such a crisis. To no man was the value of this alliance so apparent as to Herbert Edwardes; no man pressed its importance so earnestly upon the Governor-General. He believed that Dost Muhammad would respond with pleasure to an invitation to meet on the frontier of the two States a representative of the British Government, and to discuss the terms of a friendly alliance; and he recommended that this invitation should be sent to him. Reluctant as Lord Canning had been in the earlier part of the year to commit himself to any decided course of Afghan policy, he now before the close of it, in the altered circumstances that had arisen, yielded to this suggestion, and afterwards, with that frankness which sat so becomingly upon him, gracefully acknowledged its wisdom, and thanked the suggester.

So Dost Muhammad was invited to a conference at Pesháwar. He was, if willing to meet the representatives of the British Government, to discuss personally with them the terms of the alliance. Either Sir John Lawrence, accompanied by Colonel Edwardes, or Colonel Edwardes alone, as might be determined between them, was to meet the old Amir on the frontier, to feel his pulse, and to prescribe accordingly. It would have been a great opportunity for the younger man; but Edwardes, to whom the decision was left by Lawrence, for ever giving the lie to all that had been charged against him on the score of

vanity and self-assertion, strongly urged that the Mission should be headed by his beloved Chief. Lawrence, much doubting, however, whether the Amir would come, and little expecting a successful issue if he should come, lauded the magnanimity of his more sanguine friend, and prepared himself with all the earnestness of his nature to prove the groundlessness of his own anticipations of failure.

They were groundless. The Amir accepted the invitation, marched down with two of his sons, some of his chosen counsellors, and a body of picked troops, to the frontier; and on the first day of the new year received in the Khaibar Pass the first visit of the British Commissioners. It was with no common interest that Lawrence, Edwardes, Sydney Cotton, and the other English officers who accompanied them, looked into the face of the old Amir, whose white beard and venerable aspect had, fifteen years before, been so familiar to the eyes of the dwellers in Calcutta, and who in his fallen fortunes, half prisoner and half guest, had been a not unworthy object of our sympathies. When, nearly half a century before, the representatives of the British Government had been received almost on the same spot by Shah Sújah, they had found the Kábul ruler arrayed in gorgeous apparel, his whole person a blaze of jewellery, with the Koh-i-núr outshining it all; but the English gentlemen now saw before them only a hale old man, very simply attired in a garment of the coarse camel-hair of the country. They found him full of energy, full of sagacity; courteous and friendly in his outer manner; glad to welcome them to his camp. It was only a visit of ceremony; repaid, two days later, by the Amir, who was received in the grand English style near Pesháwar. Our troops formed a street more than a mile long, and after the Durbar marched past the Amir and his host in review order. More than seven thousand British fighting-men were assembled there, and among them were three complete European regiments, whose steady discipline and solidity, and fine soldierly bearing, made a strong impression on the minds of the Afghan visitors, from the aged Amir himself to the youngest trooper of his escort.

January 1, 1857.

The formal interviews thus accomplished, the serious business of the conference commenced on the 5th of January. The Amir had pitched his Camp at Jamrúd, and there Lawrence and Edwardes visited him, accompanied by Major Lumsden of the

Guides. Dost Muhammad, his sons standing behind him, and a few chosen Sirdars on his left, opened the discussions with a long exposition of the recent struggles in Herat, and of the policy which he had himself pursued. He had entertained no schemes of conquest embracing that principality. The movements which the Persians had thus pretended to interpret were directed only towards Kandahar. But he frankly avowed his eager longing to recover Herat; and, please God and the English, he would take it from the Persians. Swearing by Allah and the Prophet that, from that time, he would be our friend, let all the world be against him, he declared, as his enthusiasm kindled, that let the English but make a diversion in the Persian Gulf and supply him with money and with arms, he would mine the walls of Herat, blow up the towers, and take the place at the point of the sword; or raise such a flame in the surrounding country as fairly to burn the Persians out of it. The Turkomans and the Usbegs would rise at his bidding, and join against a common foe.

From that distant-frontier post, on the very outskirts of our empire, the telegraphic wires ran right up to the vice-regal capital, and the Governor-General and the Chief Commissioner were corresponding by the "lightning post" between Calcutta and Pesháwar. So it happened that whilst John Lawrence and Dost Muhammad were in conference, a horseman galloped up with a message from the former, despatched on the preceding day. In it Lord Canning told Lawrence that a reinforcement of five thousand men would be sent as quickly as possible to the Persian Gulf; and that amongst the conditions of Peace with Persia would be a stipulation that she should withdraw her troops from Herat, and renounce for ever her pretensions to interfere with Afghanistan. The significant words, "You may make use of this," were included in the message. But the time had not then come for the best use to be made of it; so John Lawrence, reserving the rest for more opportune disclosure, announced only that the reinforcements were about to be despatched to the Gulf. It was his design, at that first meeting, to elicit the views and intentions of the Amir rather than to disclose those of his own Government,*

* This course, though doubtless the one that would have suggested itself to John Lawrence's unaided judgment, was expressly dictated by Lord Canning, who had written on the 2nd of December to the Chief Commissioner,

So, making no promises of any kind, he indicated the difficulties that seemed to lie in the way of the Afghan ruler, and asked for a recital of the means and resources, by which they were to be overcome, already at his disposal, and the extent of the aid which he would require from the English. But this was too momentous a question to be answered, without much thought and calculation; so the Amir, seeking time for deliberation, said that he would unfold his views fully at the next meeting; and so the conference broke up for the day.

On the 7th, Dost Muhammad, attended by a few chosen counsellors, visited the British Camp, and the conferences were renewed in the Chief Commissioner's tent. Pursuing the old process of drawing-out, John Lawrence, at the outset, reminded the Amir of his promise to state fully his views and intentions; but it required some resolution and perseverance to keep the old Afghan to this point, and it was not without difficulty that the promised revelation was extorted from him. At last he explained that, owing to the state of the season, he could not commence his march on Herat until after the expiration of a period of two months; grass and young grain would then be springing up, and with the aid of some not very elaborate commissariat arrangements, he would be able to find provisions for his troops; that he proposed to march one column from Balkh and another from Kandahar. The muster-roll of his troops showed some thirty-five thousand men and sixty guns. These, he said, should be raised to fifty thousand men with a hundred guns; four-fifths of the men and nearly the whole of the guns should, he said, be moved upon Herat. "But," he added, "if you say take more troops, I will take more; if you say less will suffice, I will take less. I have given you my own opinion, but you Sahibs know Persia best." But when pressed for a statement of the amount of aid he would require, he said that on the morrow morning his son, Azim Jah, would wait upon the English gentlemen with all the required information in a digested form, in order that they might judge for themselves.

January 7, 1857.

saying, "It is not certain that our object will continue the same as the Amir's; neither is it certain to what extent the Amir can contribute towards it, even whilst it continues the same. For these reasons it is necessary first that we should know what he can do; and next, that we should come to a clear understanding as to the conditions upon which he shall receive aid in doing it. The meeting ought to clear up the first point at once."—*MS. Correspondence.*

So the conference broke up; and on the following day the Amir's sons, accompanied by a few of his ministers, waited upon John Lawrence, and laid before him a detailed statement of the Finances of Afghanistan, and of the military resources of the empire, together with an estimate of the aid that would be required from the English to enable the Afghans to drive the Persians out of Herat, and to hold their own against all comers. The aid that was thus sought amounted in money to sixty-four lakhs of rupees a year whilst the war lasted, and in munitions to more than fifty guns, eight thousand stands of small arms, and ammunition at discretion. It was more than the English Government were likely to be willing to give, but not more than appeared really to be wanted. The largeness of the demand, however, suggested the idea of a less extensive enterprise; and so Lawrence asked what would be required to enable the Afghans, abandoning all aggressive movements, to hold their own, without danger of encroachments from the westward. The question was not a welcome one. The Afghans were hot for an advance on Herat. If they were to sit down within their own dominions, the Persians would assuredly occupy Farah. It was for the English, of course, to decide upon the course to be pursued, but it was more in accordance with the genius and temper of the Afghans to take vigorous action in advance. Still, however, John Lawrence pressed for a statement of the requirements of the Afghans if a strictly defensive policy were maintained. The Sirdars could give no answer without consulting the Amir, so the conference broke up; and next day they returned with the statement that, in addition to what had already been supplied, four thousand muskets would be required, and money to pay eight thousand regular troops; one-half to be employed in the Kandahar country, and the other half in Balkh. But still they were eager for the larger enterprise; and one of them whispered to Edwardes that the enmity between the Afghans and the Persians was not merely an affair of this world, for that Shíahs and Súnís must always hate each other in the world to come. There was nothing more now to be said. The Afghans, on their part, had made known their wishes; and all the English gentlemen could say in reply was, that they would at once communicate with their Government.

So the telegraphic wires were again set in motion, and the substance of what had passed at the two last meetings was

communicated to the Governor-General at Calcutta. Then there was doubt in the Council Chamber. Would it be better to await detailed reports from Peshâwar by post, or at once to send telegraphic instructions to Sir John Lawrence? The former course was determined upon, and a message to that effect despatched to Peshâwar. Lawrence had sent in detailed reports of the meetings, and had added to the last an expression of his own views as to what should be done. He recommended that assistance on the larger scale, for the siege of Herat, should not be given to Dost Muhammad, but that we should give him the four thousand muskets that he required, and an annual subsidy of twelve lakhs of rupees, so long as England and Persia might be at war with each other. But it did not seem to him to be wise to await the slow process of correspondence by letter. The Amir was eager to depart; and some time must be necessarily occupied in the negotiation of a formal agreement. So Lawrence telegraphed the substance of his recommendation to Calcutta, urged that nothing would be gained by awaiting his more detailed reports, and asked permission to communicate to the Amir the proposal which he thought it best to make. To this a message was promptly returned, saying: "You may tell the Amir that the terms are agreed to. Four thousand stand of arms and twelve lakhs a year, whilst England is at war with Persia. You will proceed to arrange the articles of agreement and report them by telegraph."

This message was despatched on the 13th of January. On the following morning Lawrence and Edwardes proceeded to Dost Muhammad's camp, and unfolded to him the views and intentions of the British Government. With less appearance of disappointment than had been expected, the Amir assented to the abandonment of the expedition to Herat, and accepted the modified proposal of the English. But the despatch of a party of British officers to Kábul, which was to form part of the agreement, appeared to be distasteful to him. When active offensive warfare against Persia had been contemplated, he cherished the thought of their presence with his troops; but now the state of affairs was altered. The point, however, was one not to be yielded. If the British were to give the subsidy, they were entitled to see it rightly appropriated. Then the Amir lowered his tone, and said that he was ready to do what was expedient; and finally he agreed to all that was proposed. But next day, when his son, Azim Khan, accompanied by other

chiefs, visited, according to agreement, the English Commissioners, to settle the precise terms of agreement, the question of the Mission to Kábul was reopened. It was urged that the appearance of British officers at the Afghan capital might compromise the Amir either with his own people or with his English friends. There would be danger in their path at Kábul; but at Kandahar, threatened by the Persians, their presence would be better understood, and they might abide in perfect security. Nearly fifteen years had passed since our retributive Army had set its mark upon the Afghan capital; but still the hatred which our usurpation had engendered was fresh in the minds of the people, and Dost Muhammad knew that there were those in Kábul whom he could not trust within reach of an English throat. It was a sad thought; and Lawrence could not but ask how the alliance between the two nations could ever strike deep root when in one country such suspicions and animosities were never suffered to sleep. What the English wanted was not a temporary alliance dictated by an emergency of self-interest, but an enduring friendship based upon mutual confidence and respect. But Dost Muhammad knew the Afghans well, and little wisdom would there have been in disregarding a warning which every Englishman's heart must have told him was an utterance of the voice of truth. So it was resolved that, although we should claim, and duly record, our right to send British officers to Kábul, as to other parts of Afghanistan, yet that practically the Mission should, in the first instance, proceed only to Kandahar. It was better than that our officers should be smuggled into the capital, surrounded by the Amir's troops, virtually prisoners under the name of protected guests. There was, at all events, some definite meaning in their proceeding to the more western city, for it was a better point from which to observe the movements of the Persians. But what route were they to take? It was the Amir's wish that the Mission should proceed by way of the Bolan Pass; but this, although the route by which Shah Sujah and the Army of the Indus had marched into Afghanistan, was said to be entering the country by a back door. It was, therefore, finally determined that the Mission should proceed by way of the Paiwar Pass,* an unexplored road to Kandahar;

* It was deemed advisable that the Mission should journey to Kandahar by the route of the Paiwar Pass, a road that had never before been

and that Major Henry Lumsden, of the Guide corps, an officer of great courage and capacity, versed in the politics of Afghanistan, who had been marked from the first for the conduct of this enterprise, should be placed at its head. His brother, Lieutenant Peter Lumsden, was to accompany him, and Mr. Henry Bellew was selected to take medical charge of the Mission; a post of more importance than it appears to be in an official gazette, for in such diplomacies as these the Medicine-chest and the Lancet are often more serviceable than the Portfolio and the Pen.

On the 26th of January, the Articles of Agreement, having by the aid of the telegraph been approved by the Government at Calcutta, were ready for seal and signature; and a meeting for the conclusion of the compact was held in Dost Muhammad's tent. In attendance on the Amir were his son Azim Khan and several of his chief counsellors, whilst Lawrence, Edwardes, and Lumsden appeared on behalf of the English. Written in Persian and in English, the Articles of Agreement were read aloud in Durbar. By these the Amir engaged to maintain a force of eighteen thousand men; to allow British officers to be stationed at Kábul, Kandahar, or Balkh, or wherever Afghan troops might be posted; to receive a Wakíl at Kábul, and to send one to Calcutta; and to communicate to the Government of India any overtures that he might receive from Persia and from the Allies of Persia during the war. On their part, the English undertook, during the continuance of hostilities, to pay to the Amir a monthly subsidy of a lakh of rupees, to send him four thousand stands of arms, and, as if the wrong done had been all against us, to forget and forgive the past. It was explained that the British officers would in the first instance proceed to Kandahar; and with this assurance the Amir was satisfied. So the Articles of Agreement were signed and sealed. Then came some discussion and some interchange of compliments. A message from the Governor-General had been received by telegraph, desiring Sir John Lawrence to express to Dost Muhammad "the satisfaction which he had derived from his

traversed by Europeans, and was consequently unknown ground, and full of interest to the British in a military point of view, as being one of the approaches by which an invading force from the West might enter and attack their Indian Empire."—*Bellew's Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan in* 1857.

frank dealing, and from the clear understanding on which affairs had been placed," together with the best wishes for his health and long life, and a word of regret that he had not himself been able to meet the Amir. The message was now delivered and received with manifest gratification. It would have delighted him, he said, to meet Lord Canning, but he could not expect his Lordship to take so long a journey to see him. He had known two Governor-Generals, Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough, who had been kind to him in old times; he remembered also with gratitude the kindness of two other English gentlemen, Mr. Wilberforce Bird and Mr. Thoby Prinsep,* who had paid him much attention in Calcutta. "And now," he said, in conclusion, "I have made an alliance with the British Government, and come what may, I will keep it till death." And the promise thus given was never broken. He was true to the English alliance to the last.

On the following day a Durbar was held in the Camp of the British Commissioner, and the chief officers of the Amir's suite attended to take their leave of the English gentlemen. Dost Muhammad had excused himself on the plea of age and infirmity. The visit to Pesháwar, with its attendant anxieties and excitements, had visibly affected the Amir's health. The hale old man, who, three or four weeks before, had spent hours in the saddle, and seemed to be full of health and energy, had lost much of his bodily vigour and his elasticity of spirit. A sharp attack of gout had prostrated him; and he seemed to be growing impatient under his protracted detention in Camp. So the conclusion of the Terms of Agreement was a manifest relief to him; and it was with no common satisfaction that, on the day following the Farewell Durbar, he set his face towards Jalálábád, carrying with him, in bills on Kábul, a lakh of rupees and some costly presents from the British Government.†

January 27, 1857.

Nor was the gratification experienced at this time confined to the Amir's camp. Lawrence and Edwardes were well pleased

* Then members of the Supreme Council of India.

† The only present made by the Afghan ruler to his allies consisted of a batch of wretched horses, all of which, John Lawrence wrote, were spavined or worn out. The whole were sold for not more than 100*l.* Perhaps Dost Muhammad, remembering the "pins and needles" brought by Burnes, which had caused so much disappointment some twenty years before at Kábul, did not expect, on this occasion, to be the recipient of anything more valuable.

to think that all had gone off so smoothly; that the friendship of the Afghans had been secured at no very extravagant cost; and that, on the whole, although Dost Muhammad had not obtained all that he had asked, he had taken his departure tolerably well satisfied with the favourable issue of the meeting. Lord Canning, too, was more than well satisfied with the manner in which the negotiations had been conducted, and with the apparent result. He was not one stinting in free outspoken expressions of praise and gratitude to those who did good service to his Government; and, both in public and private letters, he cordially thanked the Commissioners, even before their work was done, for the admirable judgment and good tact which they had displayed at the conferences; giving an especial word of thanks to Edwardes as the original suggester of the meeting,* and, it might have been added, the originator of the new policy which had more recently been observed towards the Afghans. To Major Lumsden he wrote, at the same time, a letter of kindly encouragement and good advice, cordially approving the selection, "not only from his trust in Sir John Lawrence's judgment on such matters, but from everything that the Governor-General had been able to hear of Lumsden from those who knew him." He knew the power of such words; as a statesman he felt assured that they would bear good fruit; but as a man he uttered them from the kindness of his heart.

So Dost Muhammad set his face towards Kábul, and Sir John Lawrence, after a month of administrative journeying about the province, returned to Lahor. It need be no subject of surprise if the latter, as he went about his work, thinking of all that had been done at Pesháwar, sometimes asked himself, What good? and wished that the monthly lakh of rupees to be

* "I must ask you," wrote Lord Canning to Colonel Edwardes on the 19th January, "to accept my best thanks for the part you have taken in the recent negotiations, and for their satisfactory issue. I feel the more bound to do this, because the first suggestion of a meeting came from you; and so far as I can judge from the reports as yet received, and from the tone of the discussion shown in them, I believe that the suggestion has proved a very wise and useful one. It would be a good thing if all diplomatic conferences were conducted so satisfactorily, and set forth as lucidly as these have been." All this was well deserved; for the policy was emphatically Edwardes's policy; he had been the first to recommend, in Lord Dalhousie's time, that we should try the effect of trusting the Afghans, and his recommendations had resulted in the general compact of 1855.

expended on the Afghan Army were available for the improvement of the province under his charge; for he had never liked the project from the beginning. He had no faith in Dost Muhammad. He had detected him in at least one palpable falsehood, and the detection had excited in the Amir no sense of shame, but rather a feeling of admiration at the clever incredulity of the Faringhis. The expulsion of the Persians from Herat, or even the raising of the Turkoman tribes, was, in Lawrence's opinion, so far beyond the power of the Amir, that he believed, on the other hand, that the Persians would have little difficulty in seizing Kandahar. This belief in the weakness of Dost Muhammad was based upon a somewhat exaggerated estimate of the disunion among the chief people of the country. But even if the Amir had the power, Lawrence could not believe that he had the will to serve the British; and he doubted, therefore, whether the subsidy would produce any tangible results. As to the question of the future of Herat, it had never even approached a solution. Dost Muhammad had been assured that the evacuation of the place by the Persians would be an essential condition of peace; but he had not been able to offer, without manifest doubt and hesitation, any suggestion as to the best means of providing for its future government. In truth, there was a lack of available capacity in the direction in which it was most natural that we should look for a new ruler. When the Amir was asked if there was any member of Yar Muhammad's family to whom the government could be entrusted, he replied that there was a brother of Sai'ud Muhammad, but that, if possible, he was a greater reprobate and a greater fool than that unlucky chief. Sai'ud Muhammad, however, had left a son, a boy of some ten years, in whose name a competent Wazír might administer the affairs of the principality; but a competent Wazír was not to be found more readily than a competent Prince. The future of Herat was, therefore, left to the development of the Chapter of Accidents. In the meanwhile, Lord Canning, though he had slowly come to this point, believed that the subsidising of the Amir was not a bad stroke of policy. It bound the Afghan ruler by strong ties of self-interest to remain faithful to the British Government. Even neutrality was great gain at a time when Persia was doing her best to raise a fervour of religious hatred against the English throughout all the countries of Central Asia. The very knowledge, indeed, of the fact that Dost Muhammad had gone down to Peshâwar

to negotiate a closer alliance with the British, must have had a moral effect at Teheran by no means conducive to an increased confidence in the Shah's powers of resistance. Altogether, it was not an inefficacious, whilst comparatively it was an inexpensive, mode of pressing upon Persia from the side of Afghanistan. But whilst he went thus far, Lord Canning was resolute to go no farther. He had made up his mind that the independence of Herat could be written only on sand; that the waves of circumstance from one direction or another must utterly efface it after a while; and that it would be wiser to abandon an effort that was so fraught with tribulation, and so sure to result in failure. Certain he was that nothing would ever induce him to send a single regiment into Afghanistan to maintain the integrity of a petty state, which Nature seemed to have intended to be a part of Persia or a part of Afghanistan, and which, as in a national and religious sense it assuredly belonged to the latter, was certain, if left to itself, eventually to fall into the right hands.*

The question of the Oudh Commissionership.

Whilst thus, in this first month of the new year, Lord Canning was eagerly watching the progress of his foreign policy, he was grappling with the great difficulty which beset his internal administration. The question of the Persian command had been settled; but it unsettled, by its solution, that other question of the Oudh Commissionership. It was clearer than ever that Jackson must be removed; but it was no longer possible that his tenure of office should come to a natural end and peacefully die out. It was necessary to lay violent hands upon it, and bring it to an ignominious close. The necessity was painful to Lord Canning; but the interests of the State demanded it, and the Governor-General, in such a case, properly overrode the man. Therefore, as Outram

* Dost Muhammad and his counsellors, during the conferences at Peshâwar, frequently asserted that Persia had, on this as on a former occasion, been instigated and aided by Russia to occupy Herat. I can discern no evidence of this. Prince Gortschakoff assured Lord Granville at Moscow that the Russian Minister at Teheran had urged the Persian Government to evacuate Herat, and so to place themselves in a better position to demand from others a like observance of treaty obligations. It may be noted here, that the Amir told Lawrence at Peshâwar that he would show him the letter which the unfortunate Russian diplomatist, Viktevitch, had carried with him to Kábul from the Government of the Czar. But he did not produce it after all.

But as the new year approached, certain promptings of failing health inwardly admonished him that it would be well to turn his face towards England for a while; and he had just communicated his wishes upon this score to the Governor-General, when there sprung up a great need for his services on a new and more hopeful field of action. So the answer that went back contained the expression of a hope that he would reconsider his determination to go home and accept the Chief Commissionership of Oudh. "There is no person in whose hands I would so gladly and confidently place the charge," wrote Lord Canning, "and my only scruple in offering it to you is, that I am proposing that which will interfere with the immediate recruiting of your health. But I will not for this refrain from executing my intention to do so, which was formed many days before I received your letter." And truly a most wise intention; formed without any doubts and misgivings upon his part, for he knew the real character of the man; but not without some counsel against it, given in perfect honesty and good faith by one honest and faithful to the core, but under a false impression, an error afterwards frankly admitted. Had the counsellors been many, and all of the same singleness and sincerity, and the same ripe experience, they could not have turned Lord Canning from his good purpose, or shaken his conviction that he was right.

January 19.

The invitation reached Henry Lawrence at Nímach. It came to him, weak and dispirited as he was, with all the renovating influence of a breath of his native air. It was to him what the distant sound of the Persian war had been to James Outram. It made the blood course less languidly through his veins. With such work as lay before him in Oudh, he could not be an invalid. The head-shakings of the medical profession were nothing, if the practitioners learned in physical symptoms took no account of the action of the mind. It was the spirit, not the flesh, that required rousing. Two great clouds, coming from opposite directions, had overshadowed his life, blighting both his honourable ambitions and his domestic affections; a heavy disappointment followed by a cruel loss. The black-edged paper on which he wrote still spoke of the latter; a certain sadness of tone in all his allusions to his public life told how fresh were the wounds of the former. "Annoyances try me much more than work," he now wrote to Lord Canning. "Work does not oppress me." He could work at

his desk, he said, for twelve or fifteen hours at a time. He had just made a tour of Gujrát, riding thirty or forty miles a day, sometimes being in the saddle from morning to night, or from night to morning. "But," he added, "ever since I was so cavalierly elbowed out of the Panjáb, I have fretted even to the injury of my health. Your lordship's handsome letter has quite relieved my mind on that point; so I repeat that if, on this explanation, you think fit to send me to Oudh, I am quite ready, and can be there within twenty days of receiving your telegraphic reply."

The substance of this letter was telegraphed to Calcutta, and it brought back a telegraphic answer. The convictions on both sides were so strong in favour of the arrangement that it was not likely to break down under any conditions or reservations on either part; and so it was settled that Henry Lawrence should be Chief Commissioner of Oudh. "I am in great hopes," wrote Lord Canning, "that the task being so thoroughly congenial to you, it will sit more lightly upon you than, measured by its labour alone, might be expected; and as to my support, you shall have it heartily. The field before you is a noble one, full of interest and of opportunities for good; and I look forward with the greatest confidence to the results of your exertions in it." So Henry Lawrence prepared himself to proceed to Lakhnao, and was soon on his way thither by easy stages; for it was not desired that he should assume office before the middle of the following month. Halting at Bharatpúr, where he took counsel with the Political agent and the Engineer officer, and did much to give a right direction to their energies, he proceeded thence to Agra, which was then the seat of the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North-Western Provinces. It was vividly remembered afterwards by one old friend with whom he held sweet communion at that time, that though his thoughts were pregnant with many grave matters begotten of the great Condition-of-India Question, and though he conversed of many things and many men, there was nothing that seemed to press more heavily on his mind than an anxious, uncertain feeling with respect to the state of the Sipáhi Army. There were few civilians in the service who knew the Native soldier so well as this friend; and as they talked over certain manifest signs and symptoms, and narrated what they had seen and heard, each saw plainly that there was a painful sense of coming danger in the other's mind. For twelve years Henry

Mr. E. A. Reade.

Lawrence had been publicly discoursing of the defects of our Indian military system, and emphatically indicating the dangers which might some day overtake the State in the most terrible of all shapes, an outburst of the Native Soldiery;* and he now playfully told his friend, but with more of sadness than of pleasantry in his speech, that the time was not far distant when the Sipáhis would hold him and the Lieutenant-Governor and other "big Brahmans," as hostages in the Fort of Agra, until all their demands were granted.

Still thinking much of this, and mindful that in the province to which he was proceeding he would stand on vantage-ground for the clear discernment of the real causes of the malady, Henry Lawrence passed on to Lakhnao. And before day had broken on the 20th of March, he had been received, at the Residency, by the man whom he had come to supplant. There must have been pain and embarrassment on both sides in such a meeting. But before he had broken his fast, the new Commissioner sat down and wrote a letter to Lord Canning, saying that he had had two hours' friendly conversation with Mr. Jackson, who had received him altogether "like a gentleman." He had found a long and encouraging letter from the Governor-General awaiting him on his arrival; and now he emphatically replied, "With your lordship's cordial support I have no fear of success." His spirit rose as he thought of the work before him. What that work was, what he found done and what he found undone in the province, when he assumed charge of his new office, will be told in a subsequent page of this story.

*** No better opportunity than this may be afforded for a note on the opinions of Sir Henry Lawrence with respect to the maintenance of the Native States of India. Having said elsewhere that he was on principle opposed to the "Annexation Policy," I recently elicited the following reply from a distinguished writer in the *Edinburgh Review*: "A writer so well informed as Mr. Kaye need not have thus held on to the skirts of a popular delusion. The course which Sir Henry Lawrence favoured in respect to Oudh, by whatever name it may be called, is plain enough. It is a course

* See Lawrence's Essays, reprinted from the *Calcutta Review*: "How unmindful we have been that what occurred in the city of Kábul may some day occur at Dehli, Mirath, or Bareli" (page 51). Again: "What the European officers *have* repeatedly done (*i.e.* mutinied) may surely be expected from Natives. We shall be unwise to wait for such occasion. *Come it will, unless anticipated.* A Clive may not be then at hand." The emphatic italics are Lawrence's. Other passages to the same effect might be cited.

which, if submitted to the 'Law Officers of the Crown,' as a question of international law, would, probably, receive from these authorities some name harsher than 'annexation.'" To this I think it right to reply, that as any opinion which I may have formed of the sentiments, on this or any other subject, of Sir Henry Lawrence, has been derived either from oral communication with him or from his letters to myself, I ought not to be charged with "hanging on to the skirts of a popular delusion." That those sentiments were what I have represented them to be, I have numerous proofs in his own handwriting. A single extract, however, from his correspondence will suffice for all purposes. Writing to me from Mount Abu on the 16th of July, 1856, with reference to the office under the Home Government of India which had recently been conferred on me, he said: "The appointment must be one of the pleasantest, unless, indeed, you feel as I do, that Government is going too fast, and that we are losing our good name among the Native States. I confess that I do not like the present system, and that I would gladly give up salary to change to a purely civil or military berth. When I read the tirades of the *Friend of India*, I half think myself (with many better men, including Elphinstone, Munro, and Clerk) a fool. The doctrine now is that it is wicked not to knock down and plunder every Native prince. My views are exactly what they were when I wrote the articles for you on the Maráthás and on Oudh. My paper on Oudh would serve as a guide to present doings in all points save the disposal of the surplus revenue, which assuredly ought to be spent *in Oudh*. Nor, indeed, do I think that we should materially lose, or fail to gain thereby. Is it nothing that we should make a garden of the nursery of our Sipáhis, and open out the resources of a province bordering for a thousand miles on our old ones? . . . . But I repeat, that my taste for politics is gone. There is no confidence left in the country; and one does not feel that the people about Government House care one straw about one's exertions on behalf of the Native States.' Surely, the trumpet here gives no "uncertain sound."

CHAPTER III.

The little cloud, January, 1857.

THE anxieties which Henry Lawrence carried with him to Lakhnao had then, for some weeks, been disquieting the mind of the Governor-General. The old year had died out, apparently leaving to its successor no greater troubles than those which were inseparable from the Persian war; but before the new year was many days old, there arose upon the horizon that little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, of which Lord Canning, at the great Farewell Banquet of the Company, had prophetically spoken. It might be little; it might be much. It might be blown away by a breath of wind; or it might expand into terrific dimensions, covering the whole heaven as with a pall. Anyhow, it had an angry threatening aspect; and the looker-on, being no alarmist, might well wish it away.

Retrospect, 1856.

Memorable, and, doubtless, well remembered is it that, when Lord Dalhousie bade farewell to the cares of Indian Government, he placed upon record an opinion that the condition of the Native soldiery left nothing to be desired. There was no reason why Lord Canning, at the outset of his career, should not take this assertion on trust; no reason why he should not hold to it for a while. He went out to India, prepossessed in favour of "the faithful Sipáhi." He had, doubtless, read the noble picture which, nearly forty years before, his father had drawn of the fidelity of the Native soldiery of the Company, unshaken by threats, unallured by temptations.* There were no flutterings of disquiet apparent

* As President of the Board of Control, George Canning had moved, in the House of Commons, the vote of thanks to Lord Hastings's Army for its service in the second Maráthá war, and in the course of his speech had paid this fine tribute to the Native Army: "In doing justice," he said, "to the bravery of the Native troops, I must not overlook another virtue, their fidelity

on the surface to raise anxious doubts and misgivings. But he had not long taken up the reins of Government, when the subject of the Native Army began to occupy his thoughts and to afford matter for much grave correspondence. The vast extension of territory which had made famous the career of Lord Dalhousie had not been followed by any corresponding extension of the Agency by which all this new country was to be administered. As so much more civil duty was to be done, it seemed, in strict logical sequence, that there was an increased demand for civil servants, and that this demand should have been supplied. But government by the Civil Service of the Company was costly; and to have called for increased agency of this kind would perhaps have supplied Leadenhall Street with an argument against the profitableness of annexation. Moreover, there was much rough work to be done in our newly-acquired provinces, for which, on the whole, perhaps, military administrators were better suited than civilians. So the military officer, as has before been said, was taken from his regimental duties to share in the civil administration of the country. Great had been, for this purpose, the drain upon the Native regiments, before the annexation of Oudh. That event brought the ascendant evil to a climax; and Lord Canning wrote home that it had become necessary to add two officers to each Native Infantry regiment and four to the Europeans. "A request," he wrote, in the early part of April, "for an addition to the number of officers in each Infantry regiment—European and Native—goes home by this mail. Four for each European and two for each Native regiment are asked. The application comes singly and in a bald shape; because the necessity of an

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Many of the Bombay Army had been recruited in the territories of the Peshwá; their property, their friends, their relatives, all that was valuable and dear to them, were still in that prince's power. Previously to the commencement of hostilities, the Peshwá had spared no pains to seduce and corrupt these troops; he abstained from no threats to force them from their allegiance, but his utmost arts were vain. The Native officers and soldiers came to the British Commanders with the proofs of these temptations in their hands, and renewed the pledges of their attachment. One man, a non-commissioned officer, brought to his captain the sum of 5000 rupees, which had been presented to him by the Peshwá in person, as an earnest of reward for desertion. The vengeance denounced by the Peshwá was not an unmeaning menace; it did, in many instances, fall heavily on the relatives of those who resisted his threats and his entreaties; but the effect was rather to exasperate than to repress their ardour in the service to which they had sworn to adhere."

immediate increase is urgent, and because I have had no time to go into the complicated questions of our military wants generally."

There was, indeed, nothing more difficult to understand aright than these military questions; difficult to experienced statesmen; altogether embarrassing and bewildering to a Governor in his novitiate. Even this matter of "more officers," so smooth as it appeared to be on the surface, when you came to gauge it, was found to contain a deposit of doubt and conflict. It was held by some, who had studied well all the deteriorating influences of which so much has been said in these pages, that the cry for "more officers" was one to be responded to with caution; that, indeed, the Native Army had already too many officers; and that now to increase their number would be to increase one of the evils that had long been impairing its efficiency. That Lord Canning, fresh from England, should have taken the more popular view of this want of officers, was natural; and, indeed, it may be said that it was a plain common-sense view, not wanting in a certain kind of logic. It had become a proverb that the English officer was the Backbone of the Native regiment; and, assuredly, the administrative demands of our new provinces had left these Native regiments, according to the recognized reading, sadly enfeebled and incapacitated. All that he now sought to do was to restore them somewhat more nearly to their normal condition. The remedy seemed to lie on the surface, and straightway he exerted himself to supply it. But the theory of the Backbone accepted, it was still possible that the vertebral column might be weakened by having too many joints; and therefore it was said by a few thoughtful and experienced men, emphatically by Sir George Clerk,* that there was more danger in giving our Native regiments too many English officers than in giving them too few; and for this reason, that being many they formed a society apart and kept aloof from their men, and became altogether in their ways of life too European. Doubts such as these, and from such a quarter, brought clearly to Lord Canning's mind the fact that the Native Army question was a very difficult one; that it was almost impossible, indeed, whilst avoiding one rock, to escape from steering upon another. But the call for more officers had been made; and, perhaps, with no

"More officers."

* Then Secretary to the Board of Control.

want of wisdom. For, although there was profound truth in what was said about the evil of too much Englishism in the Native Army, the Regular Regiments of the Company had been formed upon the European model, and the principle of command by many officers was a vital part of the system. The Irregular system might have been better than the Regular, but a Regular Regiment denuded of its officers fulfilled the condition of neither. So the Home Government recognized the want of more officers, and responded to the appeal.

Evils of extended dominion.

Another, and still more important question, soon came up for solution. The specific evils, which resulted from the extension of our dominions, varied in accordance with the direction in which we had extended them. The acquisition of new territory on the south-eastern coast had caused but little political excitement in India; but the very circumstance to which we owed our exemption from evils of one kind was the immediate source of another class of evils. It has been said that the intervention of the black waters of the Bay of Bengal cut off the sovereigns of Burmah from the brotherhood of the Princes of the great continent of India, and made it a matter of small concern whether we gained battles or lost them in that part of the world.* But that very black water made it difficult for us to garrison the country which we had won. The new province of Pegu had been brought administratively under the Supreme Government of India, and in the first arrangements made for its military defence, the regiments planted there had been drawn from the Bengal Army. But the great bulk of that Army eschewed Foreign Service.† It was not part of the conditions under which they had enlisted, that they should cross the seas. The Sipáhi, on taking service, swore that he would never forsake or abandon his colours, and that he would march whithersoever he was directed, whether within or beyond the territories of the Company. Out of the seventy-four regiments

Military defence of Pegu.

* *Ante*, pp. 47–49.

† "The natives of India have, generally speaking, a rooted dislike to the sea; and when we consider the great privations and hardships to which Hindus of high caste are subject on a long voyage, during which some of them, from prejudices of caste, subsist solely on parched grain, we feel less surprised at the occasional mutinies, which have been caused by orders for their embarkation, than at the zeal and attachment they have often shown upon such trying occasions."—*Sir John Malcolm in the Quarterly Review*, vol. xviii. p. 399.

composing the Native Infantry of the Bengal Army, six only were recruited for general service. When more Native troops had been required to take part in operations beyond the seas, it had been customary to call for volunteers from the limited-service regiments. There had been often a free response to this invitation, and the volunteer corps had done their duty well upon Foreign service. In the old times, indeed, before the new organisation, they had in this respect shown signal devotion; they had gone willingly to remote places beyond the seas and cheerfully endured all the miseries and privations of long and boisterous voyages. In one year, seven thousand Bengal Sipáhis had volunteered for service against the French in the Mauritius and in Java; and had served for many years in those islands with unvarying fidelity and good conduct.* But, even in those days, they had been at times capricious; and their caprices, as time advanced and their devotion to their officers diminished, had grown more frequent and more embarrassing.† The mutiny and massacre at Barrackpúr had arisen out of the demands of the first Burmese war, and the second war in those trans-marine regions had raised up a new crop of difficulties of the old type.

Volunteer corps.

1811.

A few sentences will tell all that need be told of this last story: The Native troops employed in the conquest of Pegu were either Madras troops or the general-service regiments of the Bengal Army. But reinforcements were needed, and so a call was to be made for volunteers. The 38th Native Regiment was then at the Presidency. It had served long and fought gallantly in Afghanistan, and it was believed that it would follow its officers to any part of the world. But when the day of trial came, the result was a bitter disappointment. The Sipáhis were asked whether they would embark for Rangún to take part in the war, or for Arakan, there to relieve a general-service regiment, which in that case would be sent on to Burmah. Their reply was, that they were willing to march anywhere, but that they would

1852.

The 38th.

* The battalions thus formed were the basis of the six general-service regiments, in the later organisation, of which mention is made in the text.

† Sir John Malcolm, writing in 1817-18, says, that all the mutinies in the Bengal Army up to that time had arisen from the blunders of their commanding officers, or from orders given to go beyond the seas. See article, previously quoted, in *Quarterly Review.*

not volunteer to cross the seas. Perfectly respectful in their language, they were firm in their refusal. Doubt and suspicion had taken possession of their minds. How it happened I do not know, but a belief was afterwards engendered among them that the English Government had a foul design to entrap them, and that if they commenced the march to the banks of the Irawádí, they would at a convenient point be taken to the sea-board and forcibly compelled to embark. Lord Dalhousie, taking, therefore, the prudent rather than the vigorous view of the situation, and availing himself of the advanced state of the season as a plea for the adoption of the feebler of the two courses before him, yielded to these first symptoms of danger, and decreed that the 38th should be sent neither to Rangún nor to Arakan, but to the nearer and more inland station of Dhákà. And so nothing more was heard for a time of the disaffection of the Bengal Army.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company, when this business was reported to them, saw clearly that it had become difficult to carry on the concerns of their vastly extended empire with one-half of their army, and that the more important half, bound to render them only a restricted obedience; so they wrote out to the Governor-General that they hoped soon to be put in possession of the "sentiments of his Government on the expediency of adopting such a change in the terms of future enlistments as might eventually relieve them from similar embarrassments." But no action was taken during the remaining years of Lord Dalhousie's administration, and Lord Canning found, on his accession, that still but a twelfth part of the Bengal Army was available for service beyond the seas. What then was to be done, when reliefs were required for Pegu? Even if the old professional ardour of the Sipáhi had been restored, the occasion was scarcely one on which the Government could have called for volunteers. The formation of volunteer regiments had been confined to periods of actual warfare; and now that we required them merely to garrison our acquisitions in time of peace, the difficulty that confronted Lord Canning was one not readily to be overcome. He found at this time that of the six general-service regiments three were then in Pegu. They had embarked on a specific understanding that they should not be called upon to serve there for more than three years, and, in the rainy season of 1856, two of the three regiments were in their third year of transmarine service. In the early part of the

October 20, 1852.

Reliefs for Pegu.

following year, therefore, a relief would be necessary; but not one of the other three regiments could be despatched; for they had all returned only a year or two before from service in the same part of the country. It was clear, therefore, that the Bengal Army could not provide the means of despatching the required reliefs by water transport to Pegu.

So a question arose as to whether the relieving regiments might not, according to their bond, be marched to the Burmese coast. It was a circuitous and toilsome journey, but it had been done, under pressure of like difficulty, thirty years before, and might yet be done again. But although the improvement of the communications between the Húglí and the Irawádi was then being urged forward by the Government, there was still a break on the line from Chátgáon to Akyab, of which our Engineers could not give a sufficiently encouraging account to satisfy the Governor-General that the relieving regiments could be sent by land in the ensuing cold season. "A part of the road," said Lord Canning, "could not be made passable for wheels by that time without the addition of eight thousand labourers to those already employed. If the use of wheeled carriages were abandoned, there would still remain encamping ground to be cleared on many parts of it; the jungle, which is already choking the tract, to be removed; preparation to be made for halting the men on the march; wells to be dug, or water to be stored, where none has yet been found; and stations and storehouses provided. Simple operations enough in themselves, but which in this case would have to be begun and completed, on two hundred miles of road, between the beginning of December, before which no work on that coast can be attempted, and February, when the troops must begin to pass over the ground, the supply of labour, as well as its quality, being very little trustworthy." "Obstacles of this kind," continued the Governor-General, "have been overcome again and again by the Sipáhis of Bengal in their marches, whenever it has been necessary to do so; but I am of opinion that it will be better in the present instance to seek some other solution of the difficulty. And I believe that the one most available is a recourse to the Madras Army."

Demands on the Madras Army.

And why not? The Madras, or, as it was once called, the Coast Army, was enlisted for general service. Posted in the Southern Peninsula, and to a great extent along the sea-board, it was as readily available for service on the other side of the Bay as the

Army in Lower Bengal. If the duty were unpalatable, it could not, when diffused over fifty regiments, press very heavily upon any individual soldier. Besides, service of this kind had some compensations of its own, and was not altogether to be regarded as a grievance.* So it was thought that the garrison of Pegu might, for a time at least, be drawn from the Madras Army. But ready as the solution appeared to be, it was found that here also there was some hard, gritty, insoluble matter at the bottom of the scheme. The Madras Government, though not unwilling to send troops to Pegu as a temporary arrangement, protested against being called upon to supply a permanent garrison to that part of our dominions. Such an arrangement would bring round to every regiment a tour of service beyond the sea once in every nine years, instead of once in twelve years; it would render service in the Madras Army unpopular; make recruiting difficult among the better class of Natives whom it was desired to enlist; and, inasmuch as every

* It must not be supposed, however, that the Madras Army had always cheerfully accepted this necessity for going upon foreign service. On several occasions they had broken into mutiny on the eve of embarkation. Once, towards the close of the last century, they had risen upon their European officers, when about to embark at Vizagpatan, and shot all but one or two, who had contrived to escape on board the ship which was waiting to receive the regiment. In a former chapter I have given some later instances, and others might have been cited. But there are some noble examples on record of another kind, and one adduced by Sir John Malcolm, in the article previously quoted, deserves to be recorded here, if only as an illustration of the influence for good of a trusted commanding officer. Speaking of the services of the 22nd Madras Regiment, he says: "This fine corps was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel James Oram, an officer not more distinguished for his personal zeal and gallantry than for a thorough knowledge of the men under his command, whose temper he had completely preserved, at the same time that he had imparted to them the highest perfection in their dress and discipline. When he proposed to his corps on parade to volunteer for Manilla, they only requested to know whether Colonel Oram would go with them? The answer was, 'He would.' 'Will he stay with us?' was the second question. The reply was in the affirmative. The whole corps exclaimed, 'To Europe!—to Europe!' And the alacrity and spirit with which they subsequently embarked, showed that they would as readily have gone to the shores of the Atlantic as to an island of the Eastern Ocean. Not a man of the corps deserted, from the period they volunteered for service until they embarked; and such was the contagion of their enthusiasm, that several Sipáhis who were missing from one of the battalions in garrison at Madras, were found, when the expedition returned, to have deserted to join the 22nd under Colonel Oram. We state this anecdote," adds Sir John Malcolm, "with a full impression of the importance of the lesson it conveys. It is through their affections alone that such a class of men can well be commanded."

regiment lost much of its morale on Foreign service, and took two or three years to recover what was lost, the efficiency of the Madras Army would be permanently deteriorated.

So Lord Canning turned his thoughts in another direction. Madras troops might be sent for the nonce to Pegu, but the permanent defence of that outlying province across the Bay must, it appeared to him, be provided for by drawing, in some way, upon the Bengal Army. There was then lying, unresponded to, among the Records of the Military Department, that despatch of the Court of Directors in which the Government of India had been urged to devise the means of relieving themselves from all such embarrassments by a change in the terms of future enlistments. After much inward thought and much consultation with others, he determined, therefore, to institute such a radical change in the constitution of the Bengal Army as four years before had been indicated by the Home Government. The reform which he contemplated was to have only a prospective effect. It was to touch no existing interests; but to be applied prospectively to all who might enlist into the military service of the State. Thenceforth every recruit was to engage himself for general service. There might be an alteration in the form of the oath, or it might simply be left to the European officer to explain to every recruit that he had been enlisted for general service. Such had been the custom with respect to the six general-service regiments of the Bengal Army, and it had been found to answer every requirement. An explanatory order might be issued by the Governor-General in Council, and then the military authorities might follow up, in their own way, the blow struck at the niceties of the old system. The Governor-General argued, with irresistible force, that every Government should be master of its own Army. He was, however, at that time, fresh from England; and he might be forgiven for not knowing how the Government could best make itself the master of such an Army as that with which he was then dealing. But he would have had no legitimate claim to forgiveness if he had failed to take counsel with those among his constitutional advisers who had spent all their adult lives in India, and who were presumably familiar with the feelings and opinions of the people. He did take counsel with them; and they urged him to pursue this course. He who, of all the Councillors, best knew the Native character, was then in

The General Enlistment Act.

General Low.

England; but the ablest man amongst them argued that there was no place like Calcutta for shipping off a large military force, and that the Bay of Bengal had become an Indian Lake. It does not seem that there was was any one at Lord Canning's elbow to tell him that, whatsoever might be the facilities of transport, the Bay of Bengal would still be the black water, the salt water, in the thoughts of the people from whom our recruits were to be drawn; still regarded with mysterious awe, and recoiled from with unconquerable aversion.

Mr. J. P. Grant.

So, on the 25th July, 1858, a General Order was issued by the Government of India, declaring that, thenceforth, they would not accept the service of any Native recruit who would not, "at the time of his enlistment, distinctly undertake to serve beyond the sea, whether within the territories of the Company or beyond them." In what light Lord Canning regarded this important change, with what arguments he supported the measures, may be gathered from his correspondence. "You will see," he wrote to the President of the India Board, "that a General Order has been published putting an end to the long-established, but most impolitic, embarrassing, and senseless practice of enlisting the Native Army of Bengal for limited service only; the sole exceptions being six regiments of Native Infantry, which are recruited on the condition of serving anywhere, and the Artillery. It is marvellous that this should have continued so long, and that the Government of India should have tolerated, again and again, having to beg for volunteers, when other Governments, including those of Madras and Bombay, would have ordered their soldiers on their duty. It is the more surprising, because no one can allege any reason for conceding this unreasonable immunity to the Bengal Sipáhi. The difficulties of Caste furnish none whatever, for the Bombay Army is recruited in great part from the same classes and districts as that of Bengal; and even in the latter the best Brahman in the ranks does not scruple to set aside his prejudices, whenever it suits him to do so. There seems to have been a dim apprehension that there might be risk in meddling with the fundamental conditions upon which the bargain between the Army and the Government has hitherto rested, and there are some few alarmists on the present occasion, but I have seen no reason to fear that the order will cause any bad feeling in the Bengal Army.

August 9, 1856.

As it touches no existing rights, it could only do so by exciting apprehensions that something more remains behind; and, probably, this may prove to be the case, for whenever I can propose a reduction in the numbers of the Bengal Regiments, I shall endeavour to do so upon terms that will give a preference of remaining in the ranks to such men as may be willing to accept general service. But this is no part of, and is not necessarily connected with, the present change; moreover, as yet it is only in my own breast." And again, a few months later, he wrote, with still greater confidence: "There is no fear of feelings of Caste being excited by the new enlistment regulations in the Bengal Army. No one will come under it otherwise than voluntarily; and the fact that a vast number of the recruits who join the Bombay regiments come from the same country, and are of the same caste, and in every respect of the same condition with the bulk of the Army in Bengal, proves that they do not, on first entering the service, hold very closely to Caste privileges. You are aware that the Bombay Army is enlisted for general service without exception. The only apprehension I have ever had (and that has vanished) is, that the Sipáhis already enlisted on the old terms might suspect that it was a first step towards breaking faith with them, and that on the first necessity they might be compelled to cross the sea. But there has been no sign of any such false alarm on their part."

November 8, 1856.

No signs truly apparent at Government House; but many and great in the Native villages, and much talk in the Lines and Bazaars. It was hardly right even to say that there was no interference with existing interests. For the interest of the Sipáhi in the Bengal Army was an hereditary interest. If the British Government did not at once assume the right to send him across the sea, it seemed certain that his sons would be sent. There was an end, indeed, of the exclusive privileges which the Bengal Sipáhi had so long enjoyed; the service never could be hereafter what it had been of old; and all the old pride, therefore, with which the veteran had thought of his boys succeeding him was now suddenly extinguished. Besides, the effect, he said, would be, that high-caste men would shrink from entering the service, and that, therefore, the vacant places of his brethren would be filled by men with whom he could have no feeling of comradeship. And this was no imaginary fear. No sooner had the order made its way through the Provinces, than it

became patent to all engaged in the work of enlistment that the same high-caste men as had before been readily recruited were no longer pressing forward to enter the British service.* As it was believed that we had too many Brahmans and Rajputs in the Bengal Army, this in itself might have been no great evil. But it was of all things the least likely that such an order should pass into general circulation without being ignorantly misunderstood by some, and designedly misinterpreted by others.

Enlistment of Sikhs.

So it was soon said that the English gentlemen were trying to rid themselves of their old high-caste Sipáhis, and that soon the profession which had been followed, with honourable pride, by generation after generation of old soldier-families would not be open to them. And this belief was greatly strengthened by a rumour which went forth about the same time, to the effect that Government had determined on enlisting thirty thousand more Sikhs. The conquest of the Panjáb had placed at our disposal the services of a warlike race, always eager to wear the uniform of a successful ruler, for in their eyes success was plunder. Less dainty in the choice of their battlefields, and not less brave or robust in battle, they were the very kind of mercenaries that we wanted to give new bone and sinew to the body of our Native Army. Whether there were or were not, at this time, a tendency to over-work this new and promising recruiting-ground, it is certain that the old race of Sipáhis believed that we were designedly working it to their injury and their overthrow. They gave ready credence, therefore, to exaggerated reports of Sikh enlistments, and, coupling them with the New General Service Order, leapt to the conclusion that the English had done with the old Bengal Army, and were about to substitute for it another that would go anywhere and do anything, like coolies and pariahs.

* Take, in proof of this, the following extract from a letter written by Sir Henry Lawrence to Lord Canning, on the 1st of May, 1857: "The General Service Enlistment Oath is most distasteful, keeps many out of the service, and frightens the old Sipáhis, who imagine that the oaths of the young recruits affect the whole regiment. One of the best captains of the 13th Native Infantry, in this place, said to me last week that he had clearly ascertained this fact: Mr. E. A. Reade, of the Sudder Board, who was for years collector of Gorákhpúr, had the General Service Order given to him as a reason last year, when on his tour, by Rajputs, for not entering the service. The salt water, he told me, was the universal answer."—*MS. Correspondence.*

Moreover, there were not wanting those who were eager to persuade the Sipáhis of the Bengal Army that this new Act was another insidious attempt to destroy the Caste of the people, and to make men of all creeds do the bidding of the English, by merging all into the one faith of the Faringhi. It was another link in the great chain of evidence which had been artfully employed to convict the British Government of the charge of aiming at the compulsory conversion of the people. The season was most propitious. The coming of Lord Canning had, by some strange process of association which I find it impossible to trace, been identified with certain alleged instructions from England, emanating from the Queen herself in Council, for the Christianisation, by fair means or by foul, of the great mass of the people; and now one of the first acts of his Government was to issue an order making it compulsory on the Sipáhi to take to the transport vessel, to cross the black water, and to serve in strange parts of the world, far away, perhaps, from all the emblems and observances of his religion, among a people sacrilegious and unclean.

Effects of the General Enlistment Order.

The Native mind was, at this time, in a most sensitive state, and easily wrought upon by suspicious appearances. What these appearances were, has, in some measure, been shown in former chapters of this narrative. Even the Railway and the Electric Telegraph had been accounted as blows struck at the religions of the country. Nor was this purely a creation of the Native mind, an unaided conception of the Priests or the People; for the missionaries themselves had pleaded the recent material progress of the English as an argument in favour of the adoption by the inhabitants of India of one universal religion. "The time appears to have come," they said in an Address which was extensively circulated in Bengal during the closing years of Lord Dalhousie's administration, "when earnest consideration should be given to the question, whether or not all men should embrace the same system of religion. Railways, Steam-vessels, and the Electric Telegraph are rapidly uniting all the nations of the earth. The more they are brought together, the more certain does the conclusion become that all have the same wants, the same anxieties, and the same sorrows;" and so on, with manifest endeavour to prove that European civilization was the forerunner of an inevitable absorption of all other

Apprehensions and alarms.

faiths into the one faith of the White Ruler. This had gone forth, an egregious Christian manifesto, not wanting in fundamental truth, or in certain abstract proprieties of argument and diction, to "Educated Natives," especially to respectable Muhammadans in Government employment, some of the leading Native functionaries of Bengal. What might truly be the purport of it, and whence it came, was not very clear at first; but ere long it came to be accepted as a direct emanation from Government, intended to invite the people to apostatise from the religions of their fathers. And such was the excitement that Commissioner Tayler, of the great Patná division, wherein some disquietudes had before arisen, mainly of the Muhammadan type, reported to Lieutenant-Governor Halliday that intelligent natives, especially the better class of Muslims, were "impressed with a full belief that Government were immediately about to attempt the forcible conversion of its subjects." It was added, that "a correspondence on this head had for some time been going on between native gentlemen in various parts of the Lower Provinces;" and Lieutenant-Governor Halliday saw so clearly that this was no impalpable mare's-nest, no idle scum of an alarmist brain, that he forthwith issued a sedative Proclamation; which sedative Proclamation was speedily answered anonymously, but beyond doubt by an "intelligent native," or conclave of "intelligent natives," clearly showing by the inevitable logic of facts that if this notion of a war against the religions of India had laid hold of the national mind, the Government had by their own measures given encouragement to the dangerous belief.

Very obstinate, indeed, and hard to be removed, was this belief; so hard, that the very efforts made to efface it might only fix more ineffaceably the damaging impression on the native mind. For if the wondering multitude did not think, there were a crafty few ready to teach them, that if Government designed, by foul means, to destroy the caste of the people and the religions of the country, they would not hesitate to make the issuing of a lying proclamation a part of the process. The conviction that it was the deliberate design of the British Government, by force or fraud, to attain this great object, was growing stronger and stronger every month, when Lord Canning arrived in India, and at once became, all unwittingly, a special object of suspicion and alarm. The lies which attended, perhaps preceded, his advent, caused all his move-

ments to be narrowly watched; and it began soon to be bruited abroad that he had subscribed largely to missionary societies, and that Lady Canning, who was known to be in the especial confidence of the Queen, was intent on making great personal exertions for the conversion of the women of the country.

Lord Canning and the Religious Societies.

But there was no truth in all this. The Governor-General had done no more than other Governors-General had done before him. He had sent a donation to the Bible Society, a society for the translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental languages, and the circulation of these new versions among the people. But the translation of the Scriptures had been carried on more than half a century before, in the College of Fort William, under the especial patronage of Lord Wellesley; and Lord Wellesley's successor, during whose reign the Calcutta Bible Society was established, headed the list with a large subscription. Lord Hastings, Lord William Bentinck, and Sir Charles Metcalfe had all contributed to the funds of the society. But Lord Canning had also given a donation to the Baptist College at Sirámpúr. What then? It had been established in 1818, under the auspices of Lord Hastings, whose name had been published as the "First Patron" of the Institution, and it had received the support of subsequent Governors-General without question or comment. Besides these donations, he had made a contribution to the support of the excellent school of the Free Church Mission, under the management of Dr. Duff, as Lord Dalhousie had done before him. "I admit," he said, "that the Head of the Government in India ought to abstain from acts which may have the appearance of an exercise of power, authority, solicitation, or persuasion towards inducing natives to change their religion. But if it is contended that a school like this, thoroughly catholic and liberal, open to students of every creed, doing violence to none, and so conducted as to disarm hostility and jealousy (the number of the Hindu and Musulman scholars shows this), is not to have countenance and support from the Governor-General because it is managed by missionaries, I join issue on that point. I am not prepared to act upon that doctrine."

And what had Lady Canning done? She had taken a true womanly interest in the education of native female children. She had visited the female schools of Calcutta in a quiet, unobtrusive way; but once only in each case, save with a notable

Kulinism. And, at such a time, Orthodoxy, staggering under blows given, and shrinking from blows to come, looked aghast even at such small manifestations as the visits of the wife of the Governor-General to the Bethune female school. It was clear that the English, with their overpowering love of rule, were about now to regulate in India, after their own fashion, the relations of the two sexes to each other.*

Lord Canning found this movement afoot; he in no wise instituted it. He found that Lord Dalhousie, after an experience of many years, believed these social reforms to be practicable and safe; he found that the ablest member of his Council, who had spent all his adult life in India, was with all his heart and soul eager for their promotion, and with all the activity of his intellect promoting them. As to this movement against Hindu polygamy, which was intended to prune down the evil, not wholly to eradicate it, there was something, to his European understanding, grotesque in the notion of a Christian Legislature recognising certain forms of polygamy, and addressing itself only to the abuses of the system, as though to Christian eyes it were not altogether an abuse. But he could see plainly enough that only by admitting such a compromise could the good thing be done at all; and seeing also the necessity of proceeding warily with such a delicate operation, he was not disposed, in the first instance, to do more than to feel the pulse of the people. It would be wise to delay actual legislation until public opinion should have been more unmistakably evoked.†

* Sir Henry Lawrence clearly discerned the danger of this, and in an article in the *Calcutta Review*, written in 1856, pointed it out: "Of late years," he wrote, "the wheels of Government have been moving very fast. Many native prejudices have been shocked. Natives are now threatened with the abolition of polygamy. It would not be difficult to twist this into an attack on Hinduism. At any rate, the faster the vessel glides, the more need of caution, of watching the weather, the rocks, and the shoals."

† Lord Canning's opinions are so clearly expressed in the following passage, that it is right that his words should be given: "It will no doubt be a little staggering to find ourselves drawing up a law by which, although a horrible abuse of polygamy will be checked, a very liberal amount of it will be sanctioned, and which must recognise as justifying it reasons which we believe to be no justification whatever. It may be said that we shall only be enforcing Hindu law, and that we are constantly doing this in many ways which abstractedly we should not approve. But I do not know that we have any examples of laws of our own making and wording, by which anything so con-

In the personal action of Lord Canning during this year of his novitiate, in the promotion either of the religious conversion or the social reformation of the people, I can see no traces of intemperate zeal. But it is not to be questioned that just at this time there was a combination of many untoward circumstances to strengthen the belief, which had been growing for some years, that the English Government were bent upon bringing, by fair means or by foul, all the nations of India under the single yoke of the White Man's faith. Nor is it less certain that at such a time the order for the enlistment of Native troops for general service appeared to their unaided comprehensions, and was designedly declared by others, to be a part of the scheme. There were those, indeed, who saw, or professed to see, in this matter, the very root of our cherished desire for the conversion of the people. It was said that we wished to bring them all to our own faith in order that we might find them willing to do our bidding in all parts of the world, that they might shrink from no kind of work by sea or by land, and even fight our battles in Europe; for it was plain that England had sad lack of fighting-men, or she would not have drawn upon India for them during the Crimean war. In the art of what is called "putting two and two together," there were many intelligent natives by no means deficient, and deeper and deeper the great suspicion struck root in the popular mind.

There was another ugly symptom, too, at this time, which greatly, in some particular quarters, strengthened this impres-

trary to our convictions of right and wrong as the taking of a second wife, for the reasons allowed by Menu (or at least for eight of them out of ten), is declared lawful. This, however, is a matter of appearance and feeling rather than of substance. Practically, a monstrous horror would be put an end to, and we might keep ourselves straight even in appearance by making it very clear in the preamble that the act is passed at the desire of the Hindus to rescue their own law and custom from a great abuse, and that in no respect is it proposed to substitute English law for the laws of that people. . . . . Upon the whole, I come, without hesitation, to the conclusion that the movement ought to be encouraged to our utmost, and that the existence and strength of it ought to be made generally known. The presentation of the petitions to the Legislative Council, and their publication, will effect this. How soon the introduction of a bill should follow, or how much time should be given to seeing whether serious opposition is evoked, I should like to talk over with you some day, as also the scope of the bill."—*Lord Canning to Mr. J. P. Grant, June 20, 1856. MS. Correspondence.*

sion of coming danger among the Sipáhis of the Bengal Army. There were among the European officers of that army many earnest-minded, zealous Christians; men whose hearts were wrung by the sight of the vast mass of heathendom around them, and who especially deplored the darkness which brooded over their companions in arms, their children in the service of the State, the Sipáhis who looked up to and obeyed them. Some, in their conscientious prudence, grieved in silence, and rendered unto Cæsar the homage of a wise forbearance. Others, conscientiously imprudent, believed that it was their duty to render unto God the just tribute of an apostolic activity. It was the creed of these last that all men were alike to them, as having souls to be saved, and that no external circumstances affected their onw inalienable right to do their great Master's work. If under the pressure of these convictions they had changed the red coat for the black, and the sword for the shepherd's crook, they would have fairly earned the admiration of all good men. But holding fast to the wages of the State, they went about with the order-book in one hand and the Bible in the other; and thus they did a great and grievous wrong to the Government they professed to serve. To what extent this missionary zeal pervaded our English officers, it is not easy, with much precision, to declare. But there were some of whose missionary zeal there is now no remnant of a doubt—some who confessed, nay, openly gloried in their proselytising endeavours. One officer, who in 1857 was commandant of a regiment of Infantry, said vauntingly in that year: "I beg to state that during the last twenty years and upwards I have been in the habit of speaking to natives of all classes, Sipáhis and others, making no distinction, since there is no respect of persons with God, on the subject of our religion, in the highways, cities, bazaars, and villages—not in the Lines and regimental Bazaars. I have done this from a conviction that every converted Christian is expected, or rather commanded, by the Scriptures to make known the glad tidings of salvation to his lost fellow-creatures, Our Saviour having offered Himself up as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, by which alone salvation can be secured. He has directed that this salvation should be freely offered to all without exception." Again, in another letter, he wrote: "As to the question whether I have endeavoured to convert Sipáhis and others to Christianity, I would humbly reply that this has been my object, and I

conceive is the aim and end of every Christian who speaks the word of God to another—merely that the Lord would make him the happy instrument of converting his neighbour to God, or, in other words, of rescuing him from eternal destruction." "On matters connected with religion," he added, "I feel myself called upon to act in two capacities—'to render unto Cæsar (or the Government) the things that are Cæsar's, and to render unto God the things that are God's.' Temporal matters and spiritual matters are thus kept clearly under their respective heads. When speaking, therefore, to a native on the subject of religion, I am then acting in the capacity of a Christian soldier under the authority of my heavenly superior; whereas in temporal matters I act as a general officer, under the authority and order of my earthly superior." * Reading this, one does not know whether more to admire the Christian courage of the writer or to marvel at the strange moral blindness which would not suffer him to see that he could not serve both God and Mammon; that ignoring the known wishes and instructions of his temporal master, he could not do his duty to his spiritual Lord; and that if in such a case the two services were antagonistic to each other, it was his part, as a Christian, to divest himself of his purchased allegiance to the less worthy Government, and to serve the Other and the Higher without hindrance and without reproach. He was not bound to continue to follow such a calling, but whilst following it he was bound to do his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him.

Whilst all these disturbing influences were at work, and on many accounts most actively in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, there came from afar, across the North-Western frontier, a current of political agitation, which was met by other streams of native origin, turgid also with troublous rumours. The Persian Government, in best of times given to treachery and trickery, even under the fairest outside show of friendship, were not likely in such a conjuncture as had arisen at the end of 1856 to let slip any available means of damaging an enemy. Holding fast to the maxim that "All is fair in war," they endeavoured, not unwisely after their kind, to raise manifold excitements on our Northern frontier, and somehow to "create

* Lieutenant-Colonel Wheler to Government, April 15, 1857.—*Printed Papers.*

a diversion." There might be some inflammable materials strewn about, to which a firebrand skilfully applied, or even a spark dropped seemingly haphazard, might produce the desired result of combustion. Truly it was worth a trial. In spite of Sectarian differences something perhaps might be done by an appeal to the common faith of the followers of the Prophet. The King of Dehli, though not much as a substantial fact, was a great and potential name; there was some vitality in the traditions which were attached to it and the associations by which it was surrounded. The Mughul himself was a Súní, and the people of Dehli and its surroundings were mostly Súnís, and there was doubtless a difficulty in this, but not one that might not be surmounted. So Persia sent forth her emissaries noiselessly to the gates of the Imperial City, perhaps with no very clear conception of what was to be done, but with a general commission to do mischief to the English. Muhammadans of all sects might be invited to lay aside their doctrinal differences for a while and to unite against a common enemy. There might be great promises of the restoration of a magnificent Muhammadan Empire; and, as the least result of the scattering of such seed, the minds of the people might be unsettled, and something might come of it in good time. A Proclamation was therefore prepared, and in due course it found its way to the walls of Dehli, and even displayed itself on the Jámi Masjid, or Great Mosque. There were stories, too, in circulation to the effect that the war on the shores of the Persian Gulf was going cruelly against us. It was bruited abroad, also, that though the English thought that they had secured the friendship of Dost Muhammad, the Amir was really the friend and vassal of Persia, and that the amity he had outwardly evinced towards them was only a pretext for beguiling them to surrender Pesháwar to the Afghans.

It was believed in Upper India that this was to be done; and it was reported also about the same time that the English intended to compensate themselves for this concession by annexing the whole of Rajputáná. This last story was not one of merely native acceptance. It had been set forth prominently in some of the Anglo-Indian newspapers, and unhappily there had been nothing in our past treatment of the Native States of India to cause it to be disbelieved In the North-Western regions of India disturbing rumours commonly assume a political colour, whilst lower down in Bengal and Bihár, their

complexion is more frequently of a religious cast. The rumour of the coming absorption of these ancient Hindu principalities into the great new Empire of the British was well contrived, not only to excite the anxieties and resentments of the Rajput races, but to generate further political mistrust throughout all the remaining states of the country. It was so mischievous a report that, when it reached England and obtained further currency in our journals, even the Court of Directors of the East India Company, the most reticent of all political bodies, broke, as I have before said, through their habitual reserve, and authoritatively contradicted it.

Seldom is it that the English themselves discern the effects of these disquieting rumours upon the minds of the people. In ordinary official language, at this time, all was quiet in Upper India. But ever and anon some friendly Muhammadan or Hindu spoke of certain significant symptoms of the unrest which was not visible to the English eye;* and vague reports of some coming danger which no one could define, reached our functionaries in the North-West; and some at last began to awaken slowly to the conviction that there were evil influences at work to unsettle the national mind. The new year dawned,

* The old Afghan chief, Ján Fishan Khan, who had followed our fortunes and received a pension from the British Government, told Mr. Greathed, Commissioner at Kánhpúr, in February, 1857, that these rumours had produced a very bad effect. A private note from that officer to Mr. Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor, is worthy of citation in this place: "Ján Fishan Khan paid me a visit a few days ago with the special object of communicating his apprehensions on the present state of political affairs in India. He brought several members of his family, evidently to be witnesses of the interview, and prefaced his address with a recitation of the fruitless warnings he had given Sir Wm. MacNaghten of the course affairs were taking in Kábul. His fears for our safety rested on his belief that we intended to give up Peshámar to Dost Muhammad and to annex Rajputána. He said our maxim should be 'Prevention better than cure,' and that, with enemies at the gate, we should take care to keep the inmates of the house our friends. He appeared quite relieved to receive my assurance that there was no probability of either of the apprehended events coming to pass. It would hardly have been worth while to mention this incident, but that we so rarely receive any indication of the political gossip of the day among the native community; and we may feel quite sure that Ján Fishan was actuated by fears for our welfare, and not by hopes of our overthrow, when he gave credence to the reports. I am afraid the frequent reports of annexation in Rajputána have agitated the public mind and bred distrust among the Rajputs. It is a pity so many years have elapsed since a Governor-General had an opportunity of personally assuring them of their political safety."

and there was something suggestive in the number of the year. In 1757 the English had established their dominion in India by the conquest of Bengal. For a hundred years they had now, by the progressive action of continued encroachments, been spreading their paramount rule over the whole country; and there were prophecies, said to be of ancient date, which foretold the downfall of the English power at the end of this century of supremacy. Ever in times of popular excitement are strange prophecies afloat in the social atmosphere. Whether they are revivals of old predictions, or new inventions designed to meet the requirements of the moment, it is often difficult even to conjecture.* But whether old or new, whether uttered in good faith or fraudulently manufactured, they seldom failed to make an impression on the credulous minds of the people. Coming upon them not as the growth of human intelligence, but as the mysterious revelations of an unseen power, they excited hopes and aspirations, perhaps more vital and cogent from their very vagueness. The religious element mingled largely with the political, and the aliment which nourished the fanaticism of believers fed also their ambition and their cupidity. In the particular prophecy of which men at this time were talking there was at least something tangible, for it was a fact that the first century of British rule was fast coming to an end. This in itself was sufficient to administer largely to the superstition and credulity of the people, and it was certain, too, that the prediction based upon it was not now heard for the first time. Lightly heeded, when long years were to intervene before its possible realisation, now that the date of the prediction had arrived, it took solemn and significant shape in the memories of men, and the very excitement that it engendered helped in time to bring about its fulfilment.†

* It is certain, however, that the most preposterous claims to antiquity are sometimes advanced on their behalf. For example, it was gravely stated in a leading Calcutta journal, that a prophecy had been discovered, a thousand years old, pointing to the downfall of the English at this time; in other words, that our destruction had been predicted many hundred years before we had ever been seen in the country, or ever heard of by the people.

† Whether the prophecy was of Hindu or Muhammadan origin is still a moot question. The following, from a memorandum furnished to me by Mr. E. A. Reade, throws some light on the subject, and will be read with no little interest:—" I do not think I ever met one man in a hundred that did not give the Muhammadans credit for this prediction. I fully believe that the notion

of change after a century of tenure was general, and I can testify with others to have heard of the prediction at least a quarter of a century previously. But call it a prediction or superstition, the credit of it must, I think, be given to the Hindus. If we take the Hejra calendar, 1757 A.D. corresponds with 1171 Hejra; 1857 A.D. with 1274 Hejra. Whereas by the luni-solar year of the Sumbut, 1757 A.D. is 1814 Sumbut, and 1857 A.D. 1914 Sumbut. I remember on my remarking to a chowvey Brahman, whose loyalty was conspicuous throughout the period (he was afterwards killed in action with the rebels), soon after the battle of Oct. 11, 1857, that the Sumbut 1915 was passing away without the fulfilment of the centenary prophecy, that he replied with some anxiety, there was yet a remainder of the year, *i.e.*, till March 20, 1858; and before that time, in 1832, the Subadir, a Tawárí, of a cavalry regiment, in his farewell to a brother of mine leaving the service in that year, coolly telling him that in another twenty-five years the Company's Raj would be at an end, and the *Hindu* Raj restored. It certainly does not much matter, but I think it is the safe view to accept the tradition as of Hindu rather than Muhammadan origin."

CHAPTER IV.

January, 1857.

The storm rising.

THE new year dawned upon India with a fair promise of continued tranquillity. But it was only a few weeks old when the storm began to arise. It is in the cold weather that the British officer sees most of the Sipáhi, and best understands his temper. Company drills, and regimental parades, and brigade exercises, are continually bringing him face to face with his men, and he roams about Cantonments as he cannot roam in the midst of the summer heats and autumnal deluges. But this winter of 1856–57 had nearly passed away, and he had seen no indications of anything to disturb his settled faith in the fidelity of the native soldier. There was outward serenity everywhere, and apparent cheerfulness and content, when suddenly a cloud arose in an unexpected quarter; and a tremendous danger, dimly seen at first, began to expand into gigantic proportions.

For years the enemies of the English, all who had been alarmed by our encroachments, all who had suffered by our usurpations, all who had been shorn by our intervention of privileges and perquisites which they had once enjoyed, and who saw before them a still deeper degradation and a more absolute ruin, had been seeking just such an opportunity as now rose up suddenly before them. They had looked for it in one direction; they had looked for it in another; and more than once they thought that they had found it. They thought that they had found something, of which advantage might be taken to persuade the Native soldiery that their Christian masters purposed to defile their caste and to destroy their religion. But the false steps, which we had hitherto taken, had not been false enough to serve the purposes of those who had sought to destroy the British Government by means of a general revolt of the Native Army. For half a century there

had been nothing of a sufficiently palpable and comprehensive character to alarm the whole Sipáhi Army, Muhammadan and Hindu. But now, suddenly, a story of most terrific import found its way into circulation. It was stated that Government had manufactured cartridges, greased with animal fat, for the use of the Native Army; and the statement was not a lie.

Brown Bess.

The old infantry musket, the venerable Brown Bess of the British soldier, had been condemned as a relic of barbarism, and it was wisely determined, in the Indian as in the English Army, to supersede it by the issue of an improved description of fire-arm, with grooved bores, after the fashion of a rifle. As a ball from these new rifled muskets reached the enemy at a much greater distance than the ammunition of the old weapon, the Sipáhi rejoiced in the advantage which would thus be conferred upon him in battle, and lauded the Government for what he regarded as a sign both of the wisdom of his rulers and of their solicitude for his welfare. And when it was learnt that depôts had been established at three great military stations for the instruction of the Sipáhi in the use of the new weapon, there was great talk in the Lines about the wonderful European musket that was to keep all comers at a distance. But, unhappily, these rifled barrels could not be loaded without the lubrication of the cartridge. And the voice of joy and praise was suddenly changed into a wild cry of grief and despair when it was bruited abroad that the cartridge, the end of which was to be bitten off by the Sipáhi, was greased with the fat of the detested swine of the Muhammadan, or the venerated cow of the Hindu.

Story of the greased cartridges.

How the truth first transpired has been often told. Eight miles from Calcutta lies the military station of Damdamah. For many years it had been the head-quarters of the Bengal Artillery. There all the many distinguished officers of that distinguished corps had learnt the rudiments of their profession, and many had spent there the happiest years of their lives. But it was suddenly discovered that it was not suited to the purpose for which it was designed. The head-quarters of the Artillery were removed to Mírath. The red coat displaced the blue. The barracks and the mess-house, and the officer's bungalows, were given up to other occupants; and buildings, which from their very birth had held nothing but the appliances of ordnance, were degraded into manufactories and storehouses of small-arm

ammunition. Thus, by a mutation of fortune, when the Enfield Rifle began to supersede Brown Bess, Damdamah became one of three Cantonments at which the Government established Schools of Musketry for instruction in the use of the improved rifled weapon. Now, it happened that, one day in January, a low-caste Lascar, or magazine-man, meeting a high-caste Sipáhi in the Cantonment, asked him for a drink of water from his lotah. The Brahman at once replied with an objection on the score of caste, and was tauntingly told that caste was nothing, that high-caste and low-caste would soon be all the same, as cartridges smeared with beef-fat and hog's-lard were being made for the Sipáhis at the depôts, and would soon be in general use throughout the army.*

The Brahman carried this story to his comrades, and it was soon known to every Sipáhi at the depôt. A shudder ran through the Lines. Each man to whom the story was told caught the great fear from his neighbour, and trembled at the thought of the pollution that lay before him. The contamination was to be brought to his very lips; it was not merely to be touched, it was to be eaten and absorbed into his very being. It was so terrible a thing, that, if the most malignant enemies of the British Government had sat in conclave for years, and brought an excess of devilish ingenuity to bear upon the invention of a scheme framed with the design of alarming the Sipáhi mind from one end of India to the other, they could not have devised a lie better suited to the purpose. But now the English themselves had placed in the hands of their enemies, not a fiction, but a fact of tremendous significance, to be turned against them as a deadly instrument of destruction. It was the very thing that had been so long sought, and up to this time sought in vain. It required no explanation. It needed no ingenious gloss to make the full force of the thing itself patent to the multitude. It was not a suggestion, an inference, a probability; but a demonstrative fact, so complete in its naked truth, that no exaggeration could have helped it. Like the case of the leathern head-dresses, which had convulsed Southern India half a century before, it appealed to the strongest feelings both of the Mahammadan and the Hindu;

* No greased cartridges had been issued at Damdamah. The Sipáhis in the musketry school there were only in the rudiments of their rifle-education, and had not come yet to need the application of the grease.

but though similar in kind, it was incomparably more offensive in degree; more insulting, more appalling, more disgusting.

We know so little of Native Indian society beyond its merest externals, the colour of the people's skins, the form of their garments, the outer aspects of their houses, that History, whilst it states broad results, can often only surmise causes. But there are some surmises which have little less than the force of gospel. We feel what we cannot see, and have faith in what we cannot prove. It is a fact, that there is a certain description of news, which travels in India, from one station to another, with a rapidity almost electric. Before the days of the "lightning post," there was sometimes intelligence in the Bazaars of the Native dealers and the Lines of the Native soldiers, especially if the news imported something disastrous to the British, days before it reached, in any official shape, the high functionaries of Government.* We cannot trace the progress of these evil-tidings. The Natives of India have an expressive saying, that "it is in the air." It often happened that an uneasy feeling—an impression that something had happened, though they "could not discern the shape thereof"—pervaded men's minds, in obscure anticipation of the news that was travelling towards them in all its tangible proportions. All along the line of road, from town to town, from village to village, were thousands to whom the feet of those who brought the glad tidings were beautiful and welcome. The British Magistrate, returning from his evening ride, was perhaps met on the road near the Bazaar by a venerable Native on an ambling pony—a Native respectable of aspect, with white beard and whiter garments, who salaamed to the English gentleman as he passed, and went on his way freighted with intelligence refreshing to the souls of those to whom it was to be communicated, to be used with judgment and sent on with despatch. This was but one of many costumes worn by the messenger of evil. In whatsoever shape he passed, there was nothing outwardly to distinguish him. Next morning there was a sensation in the

* The news of the first outbreak and massacre at Kábul, in 1841, and also of the subsequent destruction of the British Army in the Pass, reached Calcutta through the Bazaars of Míráth and Karnál some days before they found their way to Government House from any official quarter; and the mutiny at Barrackpúr was known by the Sipáhis of the British force proceeding to Burmah before it reached the military and political chiefs by special express.

Bazaar, and a vague excitement in the Sipáhis' Lines. But when rumours of disaster reached the houses of the chief English officers, they were commonly discredited. Their own letters were silent on the subject. It was not likely to be true, they said, as they had heard nothing about it. But it was true; and the news had travelled another hundred miles whilst the white gentlemen, with bland scepticism, were shaking their heads over the lies of the Bazaar.

It is difficult, in most cases, to surmise the agency to whose interested efforts is to be attributed this rapid circulation of evil tidings. But when the fact of the greased cartridges became known, there were two great motive powers, close at hand, to give an immediate impulse to the promulgation of the story. The political and the religious animosities, excited by the recent measures of the English, were lying in wait for an opportunity to vent themselves in action. It happened at this time, that the enmities which we had most recently provoked had their head-quarters in Calcutta. It happened, also that these enmities had their root partly in Hinduism, partly in Muhammadanism. There was the great Brahmanical Institution, the Dharma Sobha of Calcutta, whose special function it was to preserve Hinduism pure and simple in all its ancestral integrity, and, therefore, to resist the invasions and encroachments of the English, by which it was continually threatened. There were bygone injuries to revenge, and there were coming dangers to repel. On the other side, there was the deposed kingship of Oudh, with all its perilous surroundings. Sunk in slothfulness and self-indulgence, with little real care for anything beyond the enjoyment of the moment, Wajid Ali himself may have neither done nor suggested anything, in this crisis, to turn to hostile account the fact of the greased cartridges. But there were those about him with keener eyes, and stronger wills, and more resolute activities, who were not likely to suffer such an opportunity to escape. It needed no such special agencies to propagate a story, which would have travelled, in ordinary course of accidental tale-bearing, to the different stations in the neighbourhood of the capital. But it was expedient in the eyes of our enemies that it should at once be invested with all its terrors, and the desired effect wrought upon the Sipáhi's mind, before any one could be induced, by timely official explanation, to believe that the outrage was an accident, an oversight, a mistake. So, from the beginning, the

story went forth that the English, in prosecution of a long-cherished design, and under instructions from the Queen in Council, had greased the Sipáhis' cartridges with the fat of pigs and cows, for the express purpose of defiling both Muhammadans and Hindus.

On the banks of the Húglí River, sixteen miles from Calcutta by land, is the great military station of Barrackpúr. It was the head-quarters of the Presidency division of the Army. There was assembled the largest body of Native troops cantoned in that part of India. There, on the green slopes of the river, stood, in a well-wooded park, the country-seat of the Governor-General. Both in its social and its military aspects it was the foremost Cantonment of Bengal. As the sun declined on the opposite bank, burnishing the stream with gold, and throwing into dark relief the heavy masses of the native boats, the park roads were alive with the equipages of the English residents. There visitors from Calcutta, escaping for a while from the white glare and dust-laden atmosphere of the metropolis, consorted with the families of the military officers; and the neighbouring villas of Títagarh sent forth their retired inmates to join the throng of "eaters of the evening air." There the young bride, for it is a rare place for honeymoons, emerging from her seclusion, often looked out upon the world for the first time in her new state. There many a young ensign, scarcely less hopeful and less exultant, wore for the first time the bridal garments of his profession, and backed the capering Arab that had consumed a large part of his worldly wealth. It was a pleasant, a gay, a hospitable station; and there was not in all India a Cantonment so largely known and frequented by the English. There was scarcely an officer of the Bengal Army to whom the name of Barrackpúr did not suggest some familiar associations, whilst to numbers of the non-military classes, whose occupations tied them to the capital, it was for long years, perhaps throughout the whole of their money-getting career, the extreme point to which their travels extended.

At Barrackpúr, in the early part of 1857, were stationed four Native Infantry regiments. There were the 2nd Grenadiers* and the 43rd, two of the "beautiful regiments" which had helped General Nott to hold Kandahar against all

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* A wing of this regiment was at Ránigani.

comers, and had afterwards gained new laurels in desperate conflict with the Maráthás and Sikhs. There was the 34th, an ill-omened number, for a few years before it had been struck out of the Army List for mutiny,* and a new regiment had been raised to fill the dishonourable gap. There also was the 70th, which had rendered good service in the second Sikh war. Three of these regiments had been recently stationed in the Panjáb, or on its frontier, and the 34th had just come down from Lakhnao. This last regiment was commanded by Colonel S. G. Wheler, who had but recently been posted to it from another corps; the 43rd was under Colonel J. D. Kennedy, whose tenure of command had also been brief; whilst the 70th and the wing of the 2nd were commanded by officers who had graduated in those regiments, and were therefore well known to the men. The station was commanded by Brigadier Charles Grant; and the General of Division was that brave soldier and distinguished officer, John Hearsey, of whose services I have already spoken in a previous chapter of this work.†

On the 28th of January, Hearsey reported officially to the Adjutant-General's office that an ill-feeling was "said to subsist in the minds of the Sipáhis of the regiments at Barrackpúr." "A report," he said, "has been spread by some designing persons, most likely Brahmans, or agents of the religious Hindu party in Calcutta (I believe it is called the 'Dharma Sobha'), that the Sipáhis are to be forced to embrace the Christian faith." "Perhaps," he added, "those Hindus who are opposed to the marriage of widows in Calcutta ‡ are using underhand means to thwart Government in abolishing the restraints lately removed by law for the marriage of widows, and conceive if they can make a party of the ignorant classes in the ranks of the army believe their religion or religious prejudices are eventually to be abolished by force, and by force they are all to be made Christians, and thus, by shaking their faith in Government, lose the confidence of their officers by inducing Sipáhis to commit offences (such as incendiarism), so difficult to put a stop to or prove, they will gain their object." The story of the greased cartridges was by this time in every

* *Ante*, p. 196.

† See Book II.—Account of the Mutiny in the Panjáb.

‡ The General, doubtless, meant to say, "those Hindus in Calcutta who are opposed to the marriage of widows."

mouth. There was not a Sipáhi in the Lines of Barrackpúr who was not familiar with it. There were few who did not believe that it was a deliberate plot, on the part of the English, designed to break down the caste of the Native soldier. And many were persuaded that there was an ultimate design to bring all men, along a common road of pollution, to the unclean faith of the beef-devouring, swine-eating Faringhi, who had conquered their country and now yearned to extirpate the creeds of their countrymen.

There was a time, perhaps, when the Sipáhi would have carried the story to his commanding officer, and sought an explanation of it. Such confidences had ceased to be a part of the relations between them. But it was not the less manifest that the Native soldiery at Barrackpúr were boiling over with bitter discontent. They had accepted not only the fact as it came to them from Damdamah, but the accompanying lies which had been launched from Calcutta; and they soon began, after the fashion of their kind, to make a public display of their wrath. It is their wont in such cases to symbolise the inner fires that are consuming them by acts of material incendiarism. No sooner is the Sipáhi troubled in his mind, and bent on resistance, than he begins covertly in the night to set fire to some of the public buildings of the place. Whether this is an ebullition of childish anger—an outburst of irrepressible feeling in men not yet ripe for more reasonable action; or whether it be intended as a signal, whether the fires are beacon-fires lit up to warn others to be stirring, they are seldom or never wanting in such conjunctures as this. A few days after the story of the greased cartridges first transpired at Damdamah, the telegraph station at Barrackpúr was burnt down. Then, night after night, followed other fires. Burning arrows were shot into the thatched roofs of officers' bungalows. It was a trick learnt from the Santáls, among whom the 2nd Grenadiers had served; and the fact that similar fires, brought about by the same means, were breaking out at Rániganj, more than a hundred miles away, stamped their complicity in the crime, for one wing of the regiment was stationed there. These incendiary fires were soon followed by nocturnal meetings. Men met each other with muffled faces, and discussed, in excited language, the intolerable outrage which the British Government had deliberately committed upon them. It is probable that they were not all Sipáhis who attended these

nightly musters. It is probable that they were not all Sipáhis who signed the letters that went forth from the post-offices of Calcutta and Barrackpúr, calling upon the soldiery at all the principal stations of the Bengal Army to resist the sacrilegious encroachments of the English. All that is clearly known is, that the meetings were held, that the letters were sent; and Cantonment after Cantonment fermented with the story of the greased cartridges.

The mutiny at Barhámpúr.

A hundred miles from Barrackpúr, to the northward, on the banks of the river, lies the military station of Barhámpúr. It was one well suited, by its position, for the development of the desired results. For only a few miles beyond it lay the city of Murshidábád, the home of the Nawáb Nazim of Bengal, the representative of the line of Subahdars, who, under the Imperial Government, had once ruled that great province. It was known that the Nawáb, who, though stripped of his ancestral power, lived in a palace with great wealth and titular dignity and the surroundings of a Court, was rankling under a sense of indignities put upon him by the British Government, and that there were thousands in the city who would have risen at the signal of one who, weak himself, was yet strong in the prestige of a great name. At Barhámpúr, there were no European troops; there were none anywhere near to it. A regiment of Native Infantry, the 19th, was stationed there, with a corps of Irregular Cavalry, and a battery of post guns manned by native gunners. It was not difficult to see that if these troops were to rise against their English officers, and the people of Murshidábád were to fraternise with them, in the name of the Nawáb, all Bengal would soon be in a blaze. No thoughts of this kind disturbed the minds of our people, but the truth was very patent to the understandings of their enemies.

It happened, too, unfortunately at this time, that the routine-action of the British Government favoured the growth of the evil; for when the excitement was great at Barrackpúr, detachments went forth on duty from the most disaffected regiments of all to spread by personal intercourse the great contagion of alarm. Firstly, a guard from the 34th went upwards in charge of stud-horses; and then, a week later, another detachment from this regiment marched in the same direction with a party of European convalescents. At Barhámpúr they were to be relieved by men from the regiment there,

and then to return to their own head-quarters; so that they had an opportunity of communicating all that was going on at Barrackpúr to their comrades of the 19th, of learning their sentiments and designs, and carrying back to their own station, far more clearly and unmistakably than could any correspondence by letter, tidings of the state of feeling among the troops at Barhámpúr, and the extent to which they were prepared to resist the outrage of the greased cartridges.

When the men of the 34th reached Barhámpúr, their comrades of the 19th received them open-armed and open-mouthed. They were old associates, for not long before they had been stationed together at Lakhnao; and now the 19th asked eagerly what strange story was this that they had heard from Barrackpúr about the greasing of the cartridges. It was not then a new story in the Lines of Barhámpúr, but was already two weeks old.* It had been carried as quickly as the post or special messenger could carry it from the one station to the other, and it was soon afterwards in every man's mouth. But it had wrought no immediate effect upon the outer bearing of the Sipáhis of the 19th. The story was carried to the commanding officer, who gave an assuring reply, saying that, if there were any doubts in their minds, the men might see for themselves the grease applied to their cartridges; and so for a while the excitement was allayed. But when the men of the 34th went up from Barrackpúr and spoke of the feeling there—spoke of the general belief among the Sipáhis at the Presidency that the Government deliberately designed to defile them, and of the intended resistance to this foul and fraudulent outrage—the 19th listened to them as to men speaking with high authority, for they came from the very seat of Government, and were not likely to err. So they took in the story as it was told to them with a comprehensive faith, and were soon in that state of excitement and alarm which is so often the prelude of dangerous revolt.

* The first detachment of the 34th reached Barhámpúr on the 18th of February, the second on the 25th. Colonel Mitchell, writing on February 16, says, that about a fortnight before a Bráhman Pay-Havildar had asked him, "What is this story that everybody is talking about, that Government intend to make the Native Army use cow's fat and pig's fat with the ammunition for their new rifles?" It must have reached Barhámpúr, therefore, either by the post or by Kásid (messenger) at the very beginning of the month of February.

On the day after the arrival of the detachment from Barrackpúr, a parade of the 19th was ordered for the following morning. It was an ordinary parade, "accidental," meaning nothing. But it was a parade "with blank ammunition," and a meaning was found. There were in the morning no apparent signs of disaffection, but, before the evening had passed away, Adjutant M'Andrew carried to the quarters of Colonel Mitchell a disquieting report, to the effect that there was great excitement in the Lines; that when their percussion-caps had been served out to them for the morning's parade, the men had refused to take them, and that they had given as the ground of their refusal the strong suspicion they entertained that the cartridges had been defiled. It was the custom not to distribute the cartridges among the men before the morning of the parade; but the general supply for the regiment had been served out from the magazine, and, before being stored away for the night, had been seen by some of the Sipáhis of the corps. Now, it happened that the paper of which the cartridges were made was, to the outward eye, of two different kinds, and, as the men had heard that fresh supplies of ammunition had been received from Calcutta in the course of the month, they leapt at once to the conviction that new cartridges of the dreaded kind had been purposely mixed up with the old, and the panic that had been growing upon them culminated in this belief.*

Feb. 27.

Upon receipt of this intelligence, Mitchell at once started for the Lines, and summoned his native officers to meet him in the front of the Quarter-Guard. In such a conjuncture, a calm but resolute demeanour, a few words of kindly explanation and of solemn warning, as from one not speaking for himself but for a benignant and a powerful Government, might have done much to convince those Native officers, and through them the Sipáhis of the regiment, that they had laid hold of a dangerous delusion. But Mitchell spoke as one under the excitement of anger, and he threatened rather than he warned. He said that the cartridges had been made up, a year before, by the regiment that had preceded them in cantonments, that there was no reason for their alarm, and that if, after this explanation, they should refuse to take their ammunition, the regiment

* The fact, however, was, that there were no cartridges among the stores recently received from Calcutta, which consisted mainly of powder in barrels.

would be sent to Burmah or to China, where the men would die,* and that the severest punishment would overtake every man known to have actively resisted the orders of his Government. So the Native officers went their way, with no new confidence derived from the words that had fallen from their Colonel, but, on the other hand, strengthened in all their old convictions of imminent danger to their caste and their religion. He would not have spoken so angrily, they argued, if mischief had not been intended. They looked upon the irritation he displayed as a proof that his sinister designs had been inopportunely discovered.†

Such was the logic of their fears. Colonel Mitchell went to his home; but as he drove thither through the darkness of the night, with the Adjutant beside him, he felt that there was danger in the air, and that something must be done to meet it. But what could be done? There were no white troops at Barhámpúr, and the 19th Regiment composed the bulk of the black soldiery. But there were a regiment of Irregular Cavalry and a detachment of Native Artillery, with guns, posted at the station, and, as these dwelt apart from the Infantry, they might not be tainted by the same disease. Weaker in numbers, as compared with the Infantry, they had a countervailing strength in their guns and horses. A few rounds of grape, and a charge of Cavalry with drawn sabres, might destroy a regiment of Foot beyond all further hope of resistance. Mitchell might not have thought that things would come to this pass; it

* After reading all the evidence that I can find throwing light upon this scene at the Quarter-Guard, I am forced upon the conviction that Colonel Mitchell did use some such words as these. Lord Canning was, however, under an erroneous impression when he wrote in his minute of May 13, "The inconsiderate threat, that if the men did not receive their cartridges he would take them to Burmah or to China, where they would die, which is not denied by Lieutenant-Colonel Mitchell," &c., &c.; for Mitchell had denied it on the 18th of March, saying, "I certainly did not make use of the expression above quoted."—*Lieutenant-Colonel Mitchell to Assistant-Adjutant-General. Published Papers.* [I was in Calcutta at the time, and in constant communication with officers of the 19th, and I am confident that Colonel Mitchell only told the truth when he said that he did not use the words quoted. Mitchell simply told the men that those who did not obey his orders would be brought to a court-martial. He was a good officer, and was treated as a scapegoat.—G. B. M.]

† "He gave this order so angrily, that we were convinced that the cartridges were greased, otherwise he would not have spoken so."—*Petition of the Native Officers of the 19th Regiment. Published Papers.*

was his object to overawe, and, by overawing, to prevent the crisis. But, whatsoever his thoughts at that time, he issued his orders that the Cavalry and Artillery should be prepared to attend the morning parade.

In India, men retire early to their rest, for they seldom outsleep the dawn. It was little past the hour of ten, therefore, when Mitchell, just having betaken himself to his couch, heavy with thought of the morrow's work, was startled by the sound of a strange commotion from the direction of the Lines. There was a beating of drums, and there were shoutings from many voices, and a confused uproar, the meaning of which it was impossible to misinterpret. Plainly the Regiment had risen. Ever since the Colonel's interview with the Native officers the excitement had increased. It had transpired that the Cavalry and Artillery had been ordered out. Suspicion of foul play then grew into assured convictions, and the Regiment felt, to a man, that the greased cartridges were to be forced upon them at the muzzle of our guns. A great panic had taken hold of them, and it required but little to rouse them, in an impulse of self-preservation, to resist the premeditated outrage. How the signal was first given is not clear; it seldom is clear in such cases. A very little would have done it. There was a common feeling of some great danger, approaching through the darkness of the night. Some raised a cry of "Fire!"; some, again, said that the Cavalry were galloping down upon them; others thought that they heard in the distance the clatter of the Artillery gun-wheels. Then some one sounded the alarm, and there was a general rush to the bells-of-arms. Men seized their muskets, took forcible possession of the dreaded ammunition stored for the morning parade, and loaded their pieces in a bewilderment of uncertainty and fear.

Mitchell knew that the Regiment had risen, but he did not know that it was Terror, rather than Revolt, that stirred them; and so, hastily dressing himself, he hurried off to bring down upon his men the very danger the premature fear of which had generated all this excitement in the Lines. Before any report of the tumult had reached him from European or from Native officers, he had made his way to the quarters of the Cavalry Commandant, and ordered him at once to have his troops in the saddle. Then like orders were given for the Artillery guns, with all serviceable ammunition, to be brought down to the Infantry Lines. There was a considerable space to be traversed,

and the extreme darkness of the night rendered the service difficult. But, after a while, the 19th heard the din of the approaching danger, and this time with the fleshly ear; saw the light of gleaming torches which was guiding it on to their destruction. But they stood there not ripe for action, irresolute, panic-struck, as men waiting their doom. There were many loaded muskets in their hands, but not one was fired.

It was past midnight when Mitchell, having gathered his European officers from their beds, came down with the guns to the parade-ground, where Alexander and his troopers had already arrived. The Infantry, in undress, but armed and belted, were drawn up in line, vaguely expectant of something to come, but in no mood to provoke instant collision. A very little, at such a time, would have precipitated it, for the excitement of fear, in such circumstances, is more to be dreaded than the bitterest resentments, and, even if the European officers had then moved forward in a body, the movement would have been exaggerated by the darkness into a hostile advance, and the 19th, under an impulse of self-preservation, would have fired upon them. What Mitchell did, therefore, in the unfortunate conjuncture that had arisen, was the best thing that could be done. He loaded the guns, closed the Cavalry upon them, and sent the Adjutant forward with instructions to have the call sounded for an assembly of the Native officers. The summons was obeyed. Again the Native officers stood before their Colonel, and again there fell from his lips words that sounded in their ears as words of anger. What those words were, it is now impossible to record with any certainty of their truth. The Native officers believed that he said he would blow every mutineer from a gun, although he should die for it himself. They besought him not to be angry and violent, and urged that the men were ignorant and suspicious; that they were impelled only by their fears; that, believing the Cavalry and Artillery had been brought down to destroy them, they were wild with excitement and incapable of reasoning, but that, if the Colonel would send back the troopers and the guns, the men of the Regiment would soon lay down their arms and return to their duty.

Then a great difficulty arose, which, in the darkness and confusion of that February night, might have perplexed a calmer brain than Mitchell's. That the 19th were rather panic-struck than mutinous, was certain. It was plain, too,

that a mistake had been committed in bringing down the Cavalry and guns to overawe the Regiment. It would have been wiser, in the first instance, to have used them only for protective purposes, holding them in readiness the while to act on the offensive in case of necessity. But, as they had been brought down to the Infantry Lines, it was difficult to withdraw them, until the 19th had given in their submission. The men, however, required, as a condition of their submission, that which Mitchell naturally desired should be regarded only as a consequence of it. Clinging fast to the belief that violence was intended, they would not have obeyed the order to lay down their arms; and Mitchell could not be certain that the Native troopers and gunners would fall upon their comrades at the word of command. There was a dilemma, indeed, from which it was difficult, if not impossible, to escape with safety and with honour. As men are wont to do in such extremities, he caught at a compromise. He would withdraw the guns and the Cavalry, he said, but he would hold a general parade in the morning; he commanded the station, and could order out all branches of the service. But the Native officers besought him not to do this, for the Sipáhis, in such a case, would believe only that the violence intended to be done upon them was deferred for a few hours. So he consented at last to what they asked; the Cavalry and the guns were withdrawn, and the general parade for the morning was countermanded. Whether the Sipáhis of the 19th had shown signs of penitence before this concession was made, and had or had not begun to lay down their arms, is a point of history enveloped in doubt. But it would seem that the Native officers told Colonel Mitchell that the men were lodging their arms, and that he trusted to their honour. The real signal for their submission was the retrocession of the torches. When the Sipáhis saw the lights disappearing from the parade-ground, they knew that they were safe.

On the following morning the Regiment fell in, for parade, without a symptom of insubordination. The excitement of the hour had expended itself; and they looked back upon their conduct with regret, and looked forward to its consequences with alarm. Though moved by nothing worse than idle fear, they had rebelled against their officers and the State. Assured of their contrition, and believing in their fidelity, the former might perhaps have forgiven them; but it was not probable

that the State would forgive. A Court of Inquiry was assembled, and during many days the evidence of European and Native officers was taken respecting the circumstances and causes of the outbreak; but the men, though clearly demonstrating their apprehensions by sleeping round the bells-of-arms, continued to discharge their duties without any new ebullitions; and there was no appearance of any hostile combinations, by which the mutiny of a regiment might have been converted into the rebellion of a province. Under the guidance of Colonel George Macgregor, the Nawáb Nazim of Bengal threw the weight of his influence into the scales on the side of order and peace; and whatsoever might have been stirring in the hearts of the Musulman population of Murshidábád, in the absence of any signal from their chief, they remained outwardly quiescent.

CHAPTER V.

In all countries, and under all forms of government, the dangers which threaten the State, starting in the darkness, make headway towards success before they are clearly discerned by the rulers of the land. Often so much of time and space is gained, that the slow and complex action of authority cannot overtake the mischief and intercept its further progress. The peculiarities of our Anglo-Indian Empire converted a probability into a certainty. Differences of race, differences of language, differences of religion, differences of customs, all indeed that could make a great antagonism of sympathies and of interests, severed the rulers and the ruled as with a veil of ignorance and obscurity. We could not see or hear with our own senses what was going on, and there was seldom any one to tell us. When by some accident the truth at last transpired, generally in some of the lower strata of the official soil, much time was lost before it could make its way upwards to the outer surface of that authority whence action, which could no longer be preventive, emanated in some shape of attempted suppression. The great safeguard of sedition was to be found in the slow processes of departmental correspondence necessitated by a system of excessive centralisation. When prompt and effectual action was demanded, Routine called for pens and paper. A letter was written where a blow ought to have been struck, and the letter went, not to one who could act, but was passed on to another stage of helplessness, and then on to another, through all gradations, from the subaltern's bungalow to the Government House.

The direction of the military affairs of our Indian Empire was supposed to be confided to the Commander-in-Chief. But there was a general power of control in the Governor-General that made the trust little more than nominal. So little were the limits of authority prescribed by law, or even by usage,

that, it has already been observed, there was often a conflict between the Civil and the Military Chiefs, which in time ripened into a public scandal, or subsided into a courteous compromise, according to the particular temper of the litigants. Sensible of his power, the Governor-General was naturally anxious to leave all purely military matters in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief; but in India it was hard to say what were "purely military" matters, when once the question emerged out of the circle of administrative detail. As harmonious action was constitutionally promoted by the bestowal upon the Commander-in-Chief of a seat in Council, there would have been little practical inconvenience in the division of authority if the Civil and the Military Chiefs had always been in the same place. But it often happened that the Governor-General, with his official machinery of the Military Secretary's office, was at one end of the country, and the Commander-in-Chief, with the Adjutant-General of the Army, at the other. And so it happened in the early part of 1857. Lord Canning was at Calcutta. General Anson was officially in the Upper Provinces; personally he was somewhere in Lower Bengal.* The Adjutant-General was at Mírath. The Adjutant-General's office was in Calcutta. The Inspector-General of Ordnance was in Fort William. All these authorities had something to do with the business of the greased cartridges, and it was a necessity that, out of a system which combined a dispersed agency with a centralised authority, there should have arisen some injurious delay.

But the delay, thus doubly inevitable, arose rather in this instance from the multiplicity of official agencies, than from the distance at which they were removed from each other. On the 22nd of January, Lieutenant Wright, who commanded the detachment of the 70th Sipáhis at Damdamah, reported to the commanding officer of the musketry depôt the story of the greased cartridges, and the excitement it had produced. Major Bontein, on the following day, reported it to the commanding officer at Damdamah, who forthwith passed it on to the General

* Just at this time General Anson was coming down to Calcutta to superintend the embarkation of his wife for England. He must have been actually in Calcutta when the Sipáhis were in the first throes of their discontent; but it does not appear that the subject of the greased cartridges then attracted his attention.

commanding the Presidency division at Barrackpúr. On the same day, General Hearsey forwarded the correspondence to the Deputy-Adjutant-General, who remained in charge of the office at Calcutta in the absence of his chief. But, though thus acting in accordance with military regulations, he took the precaution to add that he forwarded the correspondence "for immediate submission to the Government of India, through its Military Secretary," and suggested that the Sipáhis at the Rifle Depôt should be permitted to grease their own cartridges. General Hearsey's letter must have reached the Adjutant-General's office on the 24th of January; perhaps not till after office hours. The following day was the Sabbath. The letter of "immediate transmission" was dated, therefore, on the 26th.* On the following day, the Government of India, through its Military Secretary, addressed a letter to the Adjutant-General's office sanctioning Hearsey's suggestion. On the 28th, the General received the official sanction, and at once directed the concession to be made known to all the regiments in Barrackpúr. But it was too late. On the previous day, a significant question had been put by a Native officer on parade, as to whether any orders had been received. The reply was necessarily in the negative. Had it not been for the intervention of the Adjutant-General's office, General Hearsey might have received his reply four days before. Whilst we were corresponding, our enemies were acting; and so the lie went ahead of us apace.

Onward and onward it went, making its way throughout Upper India with significant embellishments, aided by the enemies of the British Government, whilst that Government looked at the matter in its naked reality, divested of all the outer crust of lies which it had thus acquired. Confident of their own good intentions, the English chiefs saw only an accident, an oversight, to be easily rectified and explained. There did not seem to be anything dangerously irreparable in it. But it was, doubtless, right that they should probe the matter to its very depths, and do all that could be done to allay the inquietude in the Sipáhi's mind. It was hardly to be expected that the Governor-General, who at that time had

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* It is right that this should be borne in mind. In all cases of alleged official delays the almanack of the year should be consulted, that account may be taken of a *dies non*.

been less than a year in India, should see at once all the difficulties of the position. But he had men of large experience at his elbow; and it was wise to confide in them. In such an emergency as had then arisen, the Military Secretary to the Government of India was the functionary whose especial duty it was to inform and advise the Governor-General. That office was represented by Colonel Richard Birch, an officer of the Company's Army, who had served for many years at the head of the Judge Advocate's department, and was greatly esteemed as an able, clear-headed man of business, of unstained reputation in private life. Lord Dalhousie, no mean judge of character, had selected him for this important office, and Lord Canning soon recognised the wisdom of the choice. The Military Secretary had no independent authority, but in such a conjuncture as this much might be done to aid and accelerate the movements of Government; and had he then sat down idly and waited the result, or had he suffered any time to be lost whilst feebly meditating action, a heavy weight of blame would have descended upon him, past all hope of removal. But, when he heard that the detachments at Damdamah were in a state of excitement, his first thought was to ascertain the truth or the falsehood of the alleged cause of alarm; so he went at once to the Chief of the Ordnance Department to learn what had been done.

At that time, the post of Inspector-General of Ordnance was held by Colonel Augustus Abbott, an Artillery officer of high repute, who had earned a name in history as one of the "Illustrious Garrison of Jalálábád." His first impression was, that some greased cartridges had been issued to the Depôt at Damdamah, and it was admitted that no inquiries had been made into the natural history of the lubricating material. But he was relieved from all anxiety on this score by a visit from Major Bontein, the Instructor, who asked Abbott to show him a greased cartridge. The fact was, that though large numbers had been manufactured, none had ever been issued to the Native troops at Damdamah or any other station in the Presidency Division.* The discovery, it was thought, had been

* It should be stated that much of the laboratory work of the Arsenal of Fort William was actually carried on at Damdamah; but that the ammunition manufactured there was always sent to the Arsenal and issued thence to the troops.

made in time to prevent the dangerous consequences which might have resulted from the oversight. It would be easy to cease altogether from the use of the obnoxious fat; easy to tell the Sipáhis that they might grease the cartridges after their own fashion. The uneasiness, it was believed, would soon pass away, under the influence of soothing explanations. It was plain, however, that what had happened at Damdamah might happen at the other military stations, where schools of musketry had been established and the new rifles were being brought into use. The regiments there would assuredly soon hear the alarm-note pealing upwards from Bengal. But, though some time had been lost, the "lightning-post" might still overtake the letters or messages of the Sipáhis before they could reach Ambálah and Siálkot.

So Birch, having thus clearly ascertained the real fact of the greased cartridges, went at once to the Governor-General, and asked his permission to take immediate steps to re-assure the minds of the Sipáhis at all the Musketry Depôts. The permission was granted, and orders were forthwith sent to Damdamah; whilst the Electric Telegraph was set at work to instruct the Adjutant-General of the Army, at Mírath, to issue all cartridges free from grease, and to allow the Sipáhis to apply with their own hands whatever suitable mixture they might prefer. For, at Mírath, a large manufacture of greased cartridges was going on, without any fear of the results.* At the same time he telegraphed to the commanding officers of the Rifle Depôts at Ambálah and Siálkot, not to use any of the greased cartridges that might have been issued for service with the new rifles. It was recommended, at the same time, by Birch and Abbott, that a General Order should be published by the Commander-in-Chief, setting forth that no greased cartridges would be issued to the Sipáhi troops, but that every man would be permitted to lubricate his own ammunition with any materials suitable to the purpose. But plain as all this seemed to be, and apparently unobjectionable, an objection was found at Mírath to the course proposed in Calcutta; and the Adjutant-General, when he received his message, telegraphed back to the Military Secretary that Native troops had been

January 27.

* Materials for 100,000 cartridges, with implements of manufacture and pattern cartridges, were sent from the Calcutta Arsenal to Mírath in October, 1856. These were for the use of the 60th Rifles.

using greased cartridges "for some years," and the grease had been composed of mutton-fat. "Will not," it was asked, "your instructions make the Sipáhis suspicious about what hitherto they have not hesitated to handle?" Further orders were requested; and, on the 29th of January, a message went from Calcutta to the Head-Quarters of the Army, stating that the existing practice of greasing cartridges might be continued, if the materials were of mutton-fat and wax.*

Prompt measures having thus been taken to prevent the issue of greased cartridges prepared in Calcutta or Mírath to any Native troops—and with such success that from first to last no such cartridges ever were issued to them †—the authorities, perhaps a little perplexed by this sudden explosion in a season of all-prevailing quiet, began to inquire how it had all happened. Not without some difficulty, for there were apparent contradictions in the statements that reached them, the whole history of the greased cartridges was at last disentangled. It was this. In 1853, the authorities in England sent out to India some boxes of greased cartridges. The lubricating material was of different kinds; but tallow entered largely into the composition of it all. It was sent out, not for service, but for experiment, in order that the effect of the climate upon the cartridges thus greased might be ascertained. But it did not wholly escape our high military functionaries in India, that these greased cartridges, if care were not taken to exclude all obnoxious materials from their composition, could not be served out to Native troops without risk of serious danger. Colonel Henry Tucker was, at that time, Adjutant-General of the Bengal Army, and he obtained the permission of the Commander-in-Chief to sound a note of warning on the subject. There was in those days even a greater complication of military authority than when Lord Canning presided over the Govern-

* See the telegrams published in the papers laid before Parliament. I merely state the fact that such messages were sent. But I have found it impossible to reconcile the assertion of the Adjutant-General, that cartridges smeared with mutton-fat had been in use, with the actual facts of the case, as given in the following pages on the very highest authority. I am assured that the only grease used with the ammunition of the old two-grooved rifles was a mixture of wax and oil applied to the "patch."

† This was officially declared by Government, and in perfect good faith. I believe, however, that some greased cartridges were served out to a Gurkha regiment, at their own request.

ment. There was an institution called the Military Board, composed of certain ex-officio members, one special salaried member, and a Secretary who did the greater part of the work. The trite adage that "Boards are Screens" was verified in this instance, if in no other, for responsibility was effectually obscured. It fell within the range of the Board's multifarious functions to direct the experiments which were to be made with the greased cartridges; so Colonel Tucker, in due official course, addressed a letter to the Secretary to the Military Board on the subject of these experiments, adding, "I am at the same time to communicate the Commander-in-Chief's opinion, that, unless it be known that the grease employed in these cartridges is not of a nature to offend or interfere with the prejudices of caste, it will be expedient not to issue them for test to Native corps, but to European soldiers only to be carried in pouch." But it does not seem that this warning had any effect upon the Military Board.* The ammunition to be tested was served out to Native Guards at Fort William, Kánhpúr, and Rangún, who carried it in their pouches, and handed it from man to man every time that the guard was relieved. After being thus tested for many months, the cartridges were reported upon by Committees of European officers drawn from Native Infantry Regiments, and eventually sent back to England with these reports. No objection was ever made by the Sipáhis to the handling of the cartridges, and none were ever started by their regimental officers or by the Committees.

December, 1853.

The 60th (Queen's) Rifles were at this time serving in India, but the weapon which they used was that known as the two-grooved rifle; and the ammunition consisted of a cartridge of powder only, and, separate from this cartridge, a ball covered

* Colonel Tucker afterwards said in a public journal, "I do not presume to say with whom specifically the blame of this most culpable neglect may rest. Only investigation can settle that point; but I conceive that either the Military Secretary, or the officer presiding in chief over the Ordnance Department in Calcutta, is, one or both, the party implicated." Investigation proves that both officers were blameless. The routine in those days was for the Commander-in-Chief to address the Military Board, and for the Military Board to address the Governor-General. In this case, however, the correspondence never went further than the Military Board; and it was not until after the Mutiny had broken out, and Colonel (then Major-General) Tucker had publicly referred to his neglected warnings, that the Military Secretary had any knowledge of the correspondence of 1853.

with a "patch" of fine cloth, which was smeared with a mixture of wax and oil. When rifle-companies were raised in some of the Native regiments, this two-grooved rifle was served out to them with the ammunition above described, and no kind of objection was ever raised to its use. The grease was known to be harmless, and the paper of the cartridge was never suspected. But, in 1856, these two-grooved rifles were condemned, and new Enfield rifles issued to the 60th, and also to some of the Company's European Infantry. The ammunition then, in the first instance, supplied to them, consisted of the residue of the greased cartridges sent from England for experiment; and, whilst these were being used up, others of the same description, in accordance with orders from England, were being made up by the Ordnance Departments at Calcutta, at Damdamah, and at Mírath. The mixture of wax and oil, though it answered the purpose of lubrication at the time of use, was not applicable to bundled cartridges, because its greasing properties soon disappeared. So the cartridges manufactured for the Enfield rifles were to be smeared with a mixture of stearine and tallow. The Ordnance Department then indented for tallow, without any specification of the nature of the animal fat composing it; * and, although no hog's-lard was supplied, there is no question that some beef-fat was used in the composition of the tallow. This was, doubtless, an

* It was a part of a contract for "Petty Stores," to be supplied to the Arsenal of Fort William for two years, from the 15th of August, 1856, entered into by Gangadarh Banerji and Co. The article is described in the contract as "Grease, Tallow;" and it was to be supplied at the rate of two annas (or threepence) a pound. From the Records of the Inspector-General's office, it appears that after the contract, dated 16th of August, 1856, was concluded, Grease and Tallow were indented for separately at various times. In an indent on the Contractor, dated September, 1856, the following entries appear:

Grease	For ammunition purposes.
Tallow of the purest kind	For greasing composition for Minié rifle ammunition.

In subsequent indents the article is sometimes called "Grease," and sometimes "Tallow"—"Required for Arsenal purposes." A circular was issued to the Department, dated January 29th, 1857, directing that, when applying tallow to articles which Native soldiers are required to handle, only the tallow of sheep or goats is to be employed, that of swine or cows being most carefully excluded.

oversight, for it would have been easy to enter into a contract for the supply of sheep and goats' fat, to which there would not have been the same objections; but it would seem that the Ordnance authorities had before them the fact that they were making ammunition, primarily for the use of the 60th Rifles, in accordance with instructions that had been received from England.

It was true, then, that cartridges smeared with obnoxious grease had been in course of manufacture both at Fort William and at the Head-Quarters of Artillery at Mírath. It was true that, in October, 1856, large numbers of balled cartridges had been sent up the country by steamer for the use of the Musketry Depôts at Ambálah and Siálkot.* But it was not true that any had been issued to the Sipáhi regiments; for the time had not yet come for the detachments at the Musketry Depôts to use any kind of ammunition. These detachments had received the Enfield rifle; but they were merely learning its use; learning the construction and the properties of the new weapon; learning to take it to pieces and to put it together again; learning the mode of taking sight and aim at different distances —processes which occupied many weeks, and delayed the season of target practice. Meanwhile, the old two-grooved rifles were in full service with the rifle-companies; and cartridges, as above described, with detached balls greased with oil and wax, were in constant use for practice-drill.† To these cartridges the Commander-in-Chief referred, when he telegraphed to Calcutta that greased cartridges had been long in use without exciting any alarm. It was thought at Head-Quarters that if attention were once called to the matter of the greased cartridges, every Sipáhi who had used the old "patches" would be filled with alarm.

But, whether this surmise were right or whether it were wrong, it is certain that the minds of the Sipáhis, first in one

* The numbers were 22,500 for the Ambálah Depôt, and 14,000 for the Siálkot Depôt, sent on the 23rd of October to Dehli, *viâ* Allahábád, by steamer.

† It may be advantageous to caution the non-professional reader against confounding the rifle-companies here spoken of with the detachments at the Rifle Depôts. The former were with their regiments, using the old two-grooved muskets; the latter were detached from their regiments, learning the use of the Enfield rifle in the schools of musketry at Damdamah, Ambálah, and Siálkot.

station, then in another, were already becoming overwhelmed by the great fear. The lie had gone ahead of the truth. It is doubtful whether any orders or proclamations could have arrested the feeling of alarm, which was rushing, with the force of an electric current, from cantonment to cantonment, and turning the hearts of the soldiery against us. It was plain that a very dangerous delusion had taken possession of them, and it was right that everything reasonable should have been done to expel it. But the Sipáhis, at a very early stage, were past all reasoning. It was not grease, animal grease, alone that disturbed them. Grease of an obnoxious kind, for long years, had been applied by Native hands to the wheels of gun-carriages and waggons, and not even a murmur of discontent had been heard. At Calcutta and at Mírath the greased cartridges had been made up by Natives, and, at the latter place, even Brahman boys had been employed in their manufacture. So it was thought that the objection might be confined to the biting off of the end of the cartridge. It was true that the grease was applied to the part farthest from that which touched the lips of the soldier; but in a hot climate grease is rapidly absorbed, and there was a not unreasonable apprehension that it would insidiously spread itself from one end to the other of the cartridge. So, on the recommendation of Major Bontein, a change was introduced into the system of Rifle drill, by which the process of pinching off by the hand was substituted for biting off by the teeth. This was right, as far as it went; but it could not go far. The Sipáhi was not satisfied. He argued that he had been accustomed always to bite off the end of the cartridge, and that the force of this strong habit would often bring it unwittingly to his lips, especially in the excitement of active service. There are times, doubtless, when both the Hindu and the Muhammadan have an elastic conscience. But there are seasons also when both are obdurate and unyielding. It might have been easy to persuade the Sipáhis that the British Government desired to place the matter entirely in their own hands, and to leave them to grease their cartridges and to use them after their own fashion; but too many vague doubts and suspicions had been raised in past times, and too much was being poisonously instilled into them in the present, to suffer even a remnant of confidence to cling to them in this conjuncture. To beat them back at one point was only to make them take up their ground more tenaciously at another.

"We have at Barrackpúr," wrote General Hearsey in February, "been dwelling upon a mine ready for explosion. I have been watching the feeling of the Sipáhis here for some time. Their minds have been misled by some designing scoundrels, who have managed to make them believe that their religious prejudices, their caste, is to be interfered with by Government—that they are to be 'forced to become Christians.'" But day after day passed, and though it was manifest that there was an uneasy feeling in all the regiments, and especially in the 2nd and 34th, there were no overt acts of insubordination. Their commanding officers had explained to them that Government had no such designs as were imputed to them; but even when the Sipáhis were assured that no greased cartridges would ever be issued to them, and that they might themselves lubricate their ammunition with wax and oil, so deeply rooted were the misgivings that had taken possession of their minds, that they began to suspect that animal grease had been used in the composition of the cartridge-paper, and that the English were only abandoning one trick to fall back upon another. There was a glazed surface on the paper, which gave it a greasy aspect, and favoured the growth of the suspicion, and, when it was burnt, it flared "with a fizzing noise, and smelt as if there was grease in it." So the suspicion soon grew into a certainty, and the fears of the Sipáhi waxed stronger and stronger every day.

Barrackpúr, February, 1857.

This was especially apparent in the 2nd Grenadiers; so a Court of Inquiry was held to investigate the matter. The paper was examined in Court, and the Sipáhis were called upon to state their objections. This they did, with an obstinate adherence to their belief that grease had been used in its composition. When asked how this suspicion could be removed from their minds, they answered that they could not remove it —that there was no means of removing it, except by substituting another kind of paper. So Government resolved to submit the obnoxious paper to a chemical test, and the Chemical Examiner reported, after due investigation, that it had not been greased or treated with any greasy or oily matter during or since its manufacture; that by operating on a large quantity of paper he had been able to extract as much oil as could be discovered by the use of a higher power of the microscope, but that the grease was no more than might be contracted from the

hands of the workmen who had packed it.* But there was little satisfaction even in this, for so obstinate was the conviction that the English designed to pollute the Sipáhis, that a belief was gaining ground among them that the paper was little more than "bladder." The stiffness and transparency of it favoured this suspicion, and they could not rid themselves of the impression that it was an animal substance which they were called upon to use. This was a far greater difficulty than the other, for it affected not merely the Rifle Depôts, but the whole Native Army; and there was no possibility of grappling with it except by ceasing altogether from musketry drill. If the fear had been only a fear of the fat of cows and swine, it might have been removed by the substitution of one grease for another; or if the external application of any kind of animal grease were objected to, oil and wax might be employed in its place; or if the touching of the unclean thing with the lips were the grievance, the end of the greased cartridge might be pinched off by the hand, and that objection removed. But to this fear of the paper used in all the cartridges issued to the Army, greased or dry, there was practically no antidote that would not have been both an admission and a concession, very dangerous for Government to make. It remained only that the English officer should persuade the Sipáhi that he was wrong.

There could hardly, in such a crisis, have been a better man in command of the Division than General Hearsey; for he was one who steered wisely a middle course between the troubled waters of alarm and the dead calms of a placid sense of security. He had a large-hearted sympathy with the Sipáhis in their affliction. He understood them thoroughly. He saw that they were labouring under a great fear; and he was not one, in such a case, to think that the "black fellows" had no right to suspect the designs of their white masters. He saw clearly what a tremendous significance, in the eyes both of Muhammadans and Hindus, there was in this incident of the greased cartridges, and he could not wonder at the mingled feeling of terror and resentment that it had excited. It was a case that in his opinion required kindly treatment and delicate handling; and he thought that much might be done by considerate explanations to restore confidence to their minds. So, on the

* Dr. M'Namara to the Inspector-General of Ordnance, Feb. 11, 1857. —*Published Papers.*

afternoon of Monday, the 9th of February, he paraded the Brigade, and in a loud, manly voice, using good vernacular Hindustani, addressed the assembled regiments. Earnestly and emphatically he explained to them that they had laid hold of a foolish and a dangerous delusion; that neither the Government which they served, nor the officers who commanded them, had ever thought for a moment of interfering with their religious usages or depriving them of their caste; and that it was but an idle absurdity to believe that they could by any means be forced to be Christians. He told them "that the English were Christians of the Book—Protestants; that they admitted no proselytes but those who, being adults, could read and fully understand the precepts laid down therein; that if they came and threw themselves down at our feet, imploring to be made Book Christians, it could not be done; they could not be baptized until they had been examined in the truths of the Book, and proved themselves fully conversant with them, and then they must, of their own good will and accord, desire to become Christians before they could be made so." He then asked them if they understood him; they nodded their assent, and it appeared both to the English and to the Native officers that the Sipáhis were well pleased with what they had heard, and that a heaviness had passed away from their minds.*

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But the good effect of this address was but transitory; for when the troops at Barrackpúr heard what had been done by their comrades of the 19th, there was great excitement among them, great anxiety to know the result. It was plain that the game had commenced in earnest, and that they might soon be called upon to take a part in it. But it would be well first to see what move would be made by the Government; what punishment would be inflicted upon the mutinous regiment at Barhámpúr. Days passed, and days grew into weeks, but still the Government appeared to be inactive. The 19th were quietly performing their duties, as if nothing had happened. In the excited imaginations of the Sipáhis there was something ominous in this quietude. They dimly apprehended the truth, and the obscurity of their conceptions caused them marvellously to exaggerate it. They believed that an overwhelming European force, with Cavalry and

* General Hearsey to the Secretary to Government, Feb. 11, 1857.—*Published Papers.*

Artillery, would come suddenly upon them and destroy them.*

Their fears were exaggerated; but they were not wholly baseless. When the tidings of the mutiny at Barhámpúr reached Calcutta, the Governor-General saw at once that a great danger had been providentially escaped; but with the sense of present relief came also a solemn sense of the magnitude of the crisis. The little cloud was growing larger—growing darker. Here was an act of overt mutiny, and from the very cause of all the perilous excitement at Barrackpúr. The time had now come for the Government to do something to assert its authority, and to strike terror into the minds of the soldiery. But what was to be done? It was easy to decree the disbandment of the 19th, but it was not easy to accomplish it. There was but one European regiment along the whole line of country from Calcutta to Dánápúr, and one other at the latter place, with a large extent of country to protect. Only in the presence of an overawing European force could a thousand armed Sipáhis be suddenly consigned to penury and disgrace, and neither of these regiments could be moved to Barhámpúr without dangerously laying bare other parts of the lower provinces. For a while, therefore, the stern resolution of Government was shrouded from the guilty regiment. But the punishment was slowly overtaking them, though they knew it not. A week after the commission of their offence, Colonel Mitchell had received his orders to bring down the 19th to Barrackpúr to be disbanded, and the spacious passenger vessel *Bentinck* was steaming across the Bay of Bengal, charged with a commission to bring back with all possible haste the 84th British regiment from Rangún. The English officers at Barrackpúr, even Hearsey himself, knew nothing of this, and laughed at the credulity of the Sipáhis, who believed, on the faith of their own news from Calcutta, that this step had been taken by the Government. But it soon became apparent that the Native soldiery were better informed than the Division

H.M.'s 53rd.

H.M.'s 10th Foot.

* Take in illustration the following from the Barrackpúr correspondence of the day: "The Drill Naik of my regiment came to me two days ago (March 8), and said the report in the Lines was, that there were five thousand Europeans assembled by the Government at Háurah—that they had arrived in two ships, and were to come up here during the Hulí (festival)—that the men had not slept the previous night in consequence of this report."—*Major Matthews to Brigadier Grant.—MS. Correspondence.*

Staff, for on the 20th March there was a great rejoicing among the English residents in Calcutta and the neighbourhood at the thought that the *Bentinck* had returned, and that succours had arrived.

In the meanwhile a state of sullen quietude obtained at Barrackpúr. Still clinging to the belief that the Government, detected in their first design to apply the grease of cows and pigs to the new rifle cartridges, had purposely employed those materials in the manufacture of the cartridge-paper, the Sipáhis went about their work under a prevailing sense of an impending danger and the aggravation of a great wrong.* It is probable that their fears were stronger than their discontents. They believed that their lives, and what was dearer to them even than their lives, were in peril, and they saw no means of escape except by obtaining the mastery over those who threatened to bring down such terrible calamities upon them. To what extent this idea of overpowering the Government had taken possession of the minds of the soldiery, and how far it was ever shaped into a definite scheme of action by those who were moved against us by religious or political animosities, can only be dimly conjectured. There was a belief in Calcutta that a general rising of the Native troops had been fixed for a particular night in March. It happened that, at this time, the Maharajah Sindhiá, the greatest of the remaining Maráthá Princes, was on a visit to the English capital. No one then charged, no one has since charged him, or his sagacious minister, Dinkar Rao, with any complicity in a plot hostile to the English. They were gratified by the kind and hospitable reception which had been extended to them by the Governor-General and all the chief people of the Presidency, and were pleased with everything they saw. But it happened that the Maráthá Prince invited all the principal English gentlemen and ladies in Calcutta to a grand entertainment on the 10th of March. The fête was to have been given at the Botanical Gardens on the opposite bank of the Húglí river. It is said, that when the English were thus occupied

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* So great was their uneasiness, and so strong were their suspicions, that it was believed that Colonel Wheler, who at that time went daily into Calcutta to attend a general court-martial, of which he was president, was in close consultation with the Governor-General respecting the forcible or fraudulent conversion of the Sipáhis.

with the pleasure of the moment, and the vigilance of the chief officers of Government was temporarily diverted, the Sipáhis, stimulated by the agents of the King of Oudh, were to have risen as one man, to have seized the Fort and all the chief buildings of Calcutta, and proclaimed war against the Faringhi. That the idea of such a rising found entrance into the active brains of some enemies of the British can hardly be doubted; but there is no proof that it ever took practical shape as an organised conspiracy, which would have had the result I have indicated if nothing had occurred to fustrate the plot. But a circumstance did occur, which some still regard as a special interposition of Providence for the deliverance of our people. Most unexpectedly, in the dry season of the year, there was a heavy storm of rain—one of those mighty tropical downpourings which renders all out-of-doors recreation wholly an impossibility. So the great entertainment, which the Maharajah of Gwáliár was then to have given to the English society of Calcutta, was postponed to a more auspicious moment, and the evening of the 10th of March passed over as quietly as its predecessors.

Of this combination of the Native troops at the Presidency there were, indeed, no visible signs. Outwardly it appeared that only the 2nd Grenadiers were implicated in treasonable schemes. "The 43rd," wrote Lord Canning to the Commander-in-Chief, "have refused to join in a dinner or feast to which the 2nd invited them; and some of the 70th have given up a Jamadar of the 2nd, who came into their Lines and tried to persuade the men not to bite the cartridges when the time for using them should come, and to deter them from finishing their huts, saying that there would soon be a great stir at Barrackpúr, and that their huts would be burnt down."* Another sign of this apparent isolation of the 2nd Grenadiers was afforded by an accident that occurred in Calcutta. The Native Guards for the Fort and for the public buildings in the city were furnished by the regiments at Barrackpúr. On the evening of the 10th of March a detachment of the 2nd was in the Fort, and a Subah-

* March 15, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.* The 2nd and 43rd had served together at Kandahar, and were old friends. The proposed dinner was to be given during the Húlí festival, and the officers commanding the two regiments had agreed that there was no harm in their men dining together. The refusal of the 43rd was not intelligible to them.

dar's guard from the 34th was posted over the Calcutta Mint. In the course of the evening, two Sipáhis from the 2nd presented themselves at the guard-house and sought out the Subahdar. He was reading an order book by the light of a lamp when the men appeared before him. One of them then represented that they had come from the Fort; that the Calcutta Militia were to join the Fort-Guards at midnight; that the Governor-General was going up to Barrackpúr with all the Artillery from Damdamah; and that if the Subahdar would march his guard into the Fort and join their comrades there, they might rise successfully against the Government.* This last was rather implied than expressed; but the meaning of the men was sufficiently clear; so the Subahdar ordered them to be arrested. Next morning he sent them prisoners into Fort William; and, a few days afterwards, they were tried by a Native Court-martial, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment for fourteen years.

This was a significant incident, but it was one, also, which might be turned to some account; so Hearsey determined not to lose the opportunity. His former speech to the Barrackpúr troops had not accomplished all that was desired; but it had at least been partially successful, and he believed that something might now be done by another address to the Brigade. So he suggested to the Governor-General the expediency of such a course. On the 14th of March they talked the matter over at Government House, and Lord Canning assented to the proposal. But before the day had worn out, some misgivings assailed him, as to whether the General might not be carried away, by the strength of his feelings and the fluency of his speech, to say a little too much; so after Hearsey had returned to Barrackpúr, Lord Canning sent a letter after him, recapitulating the results of the morning conversation, "in order to prevent all mistakes." This letter reached Hearsey soon after sunrise on the following morning (it was Sunday), and he at once replied to it, promising to take the greatest care not to exceed his instructions. On the next day the Native officers, who had been warned as members of the Court-martial ordered to assemble for the trial of the Sipáhis of the 2nd, were to leave Barrackpúr for Calcutta; and the General thought it advisable not to address the Brigade

* Lord Canning to General Anson, March 12, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

until after their departure.* So the order went forth for a general parade of the troops at Barrackpúr on the morning of Tuesday, the 17th of March.

There was no little tact requisite, in such a conjuncture, for the exact apportionment of the several parts of the speech that was to be delivered. The main object of it was to warn the troops against designing persons, who were endeavouring to seduce them from their allegiance; but it was desirable, also, to endeavour to pacify and reassure them, for it was plain that they were overridden by a great terror, born of the belief that the Government had sent for European troops of all arms with the intent of exterminating the Brigade. In order thus to remove the dangerous delusion which had taken possession of them, it was necessary to speak of the designs of the Government towards the mutinous 19th—to show that retribution was sure to overtake all whose guilt had been proved, but that there was no thought of harming those who had committed no overt acts of rebellion. But it was not easy in such a case to avoid saying either too much or too little. "I am afraid," wrote Lord Canning to the General, "that, however brief your observations on that regiment (and they should, I think, be very brief), you will find it a nice matter to steer between exciting undue alarm and raising hopes which may be disappointed. But I feel sure that you will master the difficulty, and I leave the task in your hands with perfect confidence of the result."† He was thinking mainly of the effect to be produced upon the minds of the Sipáhis of the 19th. He did not wish that the decision of Government should be announced before the time of carrying it into effect; but Hearsey saw plainly that it was better for the general pacification of the Brigade that the haze through which the intentions of Government appeared to the soldiery in such exaggerated dimensions should be dispersed. "For if the men of this Brigade," he wrote to Lord Canning, "know beforehand what is to take place, their minds will be made easy, and they will be disabused of the false rumours now

* "I cannot address the Brigade until Tuesday morning, as the Native commissioned officers, who are to be members of the General Court-martial to be convened at Calcutta for the trial of the Sipáhis of the 2nd Grenadiers, must go from hence before I do so. If they heard my address to the men on parade, it might bias them in their judgment."—*General Hearsey to Lord Canning, March 15, 1857.—MS. Correspondence.*

† Lord Canning to General Hearsey, March 14, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

spread about that it is the intention of the Government to attack and destroy them by European troops and Artillery." *

It was truly a great thing, at that time, to remove from the minds of the Barrackpúr regiments the great terror that held possession of them; but the 19th had not then commenced its march from Barhámpúr, and it is always a hazardous operation to move a regiment, with sentence of disbandment proclaimed against it, to the place of execution. These considerations pressed heavily on Hearsey's mind, when, on the morning of the 17th of March, he rode out to the parade-ground, and saw the Brigade drawn up before him. There was much, however, when he prepared to address them, of which there could be no doubt. Most of all was it necessary to warn them of the evil-minded and designing men who were leading them astray; so he began by telling them to beware of such men, who were endeavouring to take the bread from the mouths of good Sipáhis by making them the instruments of their schemes of sedition; then he spoke of the discontent still prevailing among them with respect to the cartridge-paper, in which they had never ceased to believe that animal fat had been used. Then he began to explain to them, and wisely, too, as he would explain to children, that the glazed appearance of the paper was produced by the starch employed in its composition, and that the very best paper used by the Princes of the land had the same smooth surface and shiny appearance. In proof of this, he produced, from a bag of golden tissue, a letter he had received, whilst serving in the Panjáb, from the Maharajah Guláb Singh of Kashmir, and, giving it to the Native officers, told them to open it and to show it to their men, that they might see that it was even more glossy than the paper which they suspected. Having done this, he asked them if they thought that a Dogra Brahman or Rajput, ever zealous in the protection of kine, would use paper made as they suspected, and, after further illustrations of the absurdity of their suspicions, told them, that if they did not then believe him, they should go to Srirámpúr, and see the paper made for themselves. Then approaching the more dangerous subject of the 19th, who had been led into open mutiny by a belief in the falsehood of the defiled paper, he said that the investigation of their conduct had been laid before him as General of the Division, and that he had forwarded it to

* General Hearsey to Lord Canning, March 15, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

Government, who were exceedingly angry, and would, in his opinion, order him to disband the regiment. That if he received orders to that effect, all the troops within two marches of the place—Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery, European and Native—would be assembled at Barrackpúr to witness the disbandment, and that "the ceremony of striking the name and number of the regiment from the list of the Army would be carried out in exactly the same manner as the old 34th Regiment were disbanded at Mirath." "I inform you of this beforehand," added the General, "because your enemies are trying to make you believe that European troops with Cavalry and Artillery will be sent here suddenly to attack you; these, and such lies, are fabricated and rumoured amongst you to cause trouble. But no European or other troops will come to Barrackpúr without my orders, and I will give you all timely intelligence of their coming." Then he told them that nothing had been proved against them, and that therefore they had nothing to fear; that all their complaints would be listened to by their officers; that their caste and religious prejudices were safe under his protection, and that any one who attempted to interfere with them would meet with the severest punishment.

Having thus concluded, Hearsey deployed the Brigade, opened out the ranks to double distance, and rode through them, stopping to notice the men who wore medals on their breasts, and asking them, with kindly interest, for what special services they had been rewarded. The regiments were then dismissed, and went quietly to their Lines, pondering all that they heard from their General. What they had heard was, perhaps, a little more than the Governor-General had intended them to hear; and Lord Canning, though he much admired and much trusted the fine old officer, had not been wholly free from alarm lest Hearsey should be carried away by his feelings, and give vent to more than he had authority for declaring. But, he added, "it will be nothing very mischievous even if he should do so." And he was right. Hearsey had intimated that Government would disband the 19th, and in this he exceeded his instructions. But it is not certain that the Governor-General lamented the excess. He regarded the disbandment of the 19th as a necessary, but "an odious business"; and, perhaps, in his inmost heart he was not sorry that he had thus escaped the painful, and to a generous mind the humiliating alternative of concealing from the regiment the doom in store for it, until

he was strong enough to execute the sentence.* Indeed, he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, saying, "The 19th are marching down steadily, and will reach Barrackpúr on the morning of the 31st. They do not know for certain that disbandment is to be their punishment, and, upon the whole, I think it was better not to tell them. But I admit that there were two sides to that question." The safer course on one side, and the manlier course on the other; and between these two the ruler and the man might well have oscillated. That there was danger in the knowledge, is not to be doubted. Hearsey had sought, by the partial revelations that he had made, to soothe the troubled spirit of the Barrackpúr Brigade; but it soon became doubtful whether the knowledge they had gained would not excite within them more dangerous feelings than those which he had endeavoured to allay. "The regiments at Barrackpúr, however, know it," wrote Lord Canning, "or, at least, fully expect it, and to-day it is confidently said in the Bazaars that the 2nd Grenadiers and the 34th intend to protect the 19th, and to join them in resisting. This is leading to alarms and suggestions on all sides. Colonel Abbott, of Ishapúr, advises the putting a gag upon the Native Press for a time, Major Bontein recommends bringing the 19th to Calcutta instead of Barrackpúr, and dealing with them under the guns of the Fort, where they will have no sympathisers within reach. Even Atkinson suggests that Damdamah would be better than Barrackpúr. I am not in any way moved from my first intention, and nothing but the opinion of General Hearsey, who has to execute the orders, that a change of plan or place should be made, would dispose me to do so. I do not think that he will give any such opinion, and I hope that he will not."

No such opinion was given; but it was plain to Hearsey, as the month of March wore to a close, that the hopes which he had once entertained of the speedy subsidence of the alarm which had taken possession of the Sipáhis were doomed to be disappointed. For when the troops at Barrackpúr knew that the 19th were to be disbanded, and that an English regiment had been brought across the black water to execute the punishment, they believed, more firmly than they had believed at the beginning of the month, that other white regiments were

* Compare Book II., page 218 *et seq.*: Considerations on the subject of disbandment.

coming, and that the Government would force them to use the obnoxious cartridges, or treat them like their comrades that were marching down from Barhámpúr to be disgraced. So the great terror that was driving them into rebellion grew stronger and stronger, and as from mouth to mouth passed the significant words, "Gora-lóg aya"—"the Europeans have come"—their excited imaginations beheld vessel after vessel pouring forth its legions of English fighting-men, under a foregone design to force them all to apostatise at the point of the bayonet.

Mitchell had started with his doomed corps on the 20th of March, and was expected to reach Barrackpúr at the end of the month. The behaviour of the men of the 19th, ever since the outburst that had irretrievably committed them, had been orderly and respectful, and they were marching steadily down to the Presidency, obedient to their English officers. On the 30th, they were at Bársat, eight miles from Barrackpúr, awaiting the orders of Government, when news reached Mitchell to the effect that the troops at the latter station were in a fever of excitement, and that on the day before an officer had been cut down on parade.

The story of Manghal Pándi.

The story was too true. On the 29th of March—it was a Sunday afternoon—there was more than common excitement in the Lines of the 34th, for it was said that the Europeans had arrived. Fifty men of the 53rd had come by water from Calcutta, and were disembarking at the river-side. The apprehensions of the Sipáhis exaggerated this arrival, and it was believed that the cantonment would soon be swarming with English soldiers. On one man especially this impression had fixed itself so strongly, that, inflamed as he was by *bang*, which is to the Sipáhi what strong drink is to the European soldier, he was no longer master of himself. He was a young man, named Manghal Pándi, a man of good character, but of an excitable disposition, and seemingly with some religious enthusiasm wrought upon by the story of the greased cartridges. He had heard of the arrival of the detachment of Europeans, and he believed that the dreaded hour had come; that the caste of the Sipáhis was about to be destroyed. So, putting on his accoutrements and seizing his musket, he went out from his hut, and, calling upon his comrades to follow him, if they did not wish to bite the cartridges and become infidels, he took post in front of the Quarter-Guard, and ordered a bugler to sound the assembly.

The order was not obeyed; but, with an insolent and threatening manner, Manghal Pándi continued to stride up and down, and when the European sergeant-major went out, fired his piece at him, and missed.

All this time the Native officer and men of the 34th on duty at the Quarter-Guard saw what was going on, but did not move to arrest the drugged fanatic who was so plainly bent upon mischief. But hastening to the Adjutant's house, a Native corporal reported what had occurred, and Lieutenant Baugh, without a moment of unnecessary delay, buckled on his sword, loaded his pistols, mounted his horse, and galloped down to the Quarter-Guard. He had just tightened rein, when Manghal Pándí, hidden by the station gun in front of the Guard, took aim and fired at the Adjutant; but, missing him, wounded his charger, and brought both horse and rider to the ground. Baugh then, disentangling himself, took one of his pistols from the holsters and fired at the Sipáhi. The shot did not take effect, so he drew his sword and closed with the man, who also had drawn his tulwar, and then there was a sharp hand-to-hand conflict, in which the odds were against the Sipáhi, for the sergeant-major came up and took part in the affray. But Manghal Pándi was a desperate man, and the strokes of his tulwar fell heavily upon his assailants; and he might, perhaps, have despatched them both, if a Muhammadan Sipáhi, of the Grenadier Company, named Shekh Paltú, had not seized the mutineer and averted his blows.

All this passed at the distance of a few yards only from the Quarter-Guard of the 34th, where a Jamadar and twenty men were on duty. The sound of the firing had brought many others from the Lines, and Sipáhis in uniform and out of uniform crowded around in a state of tumultuous excitement. But with the exception of this Shekh Paltú, no man moved to assist his officer; no man moved to arrest the criminal. Nor was their guilt only the guilt of inaction. Some of the Sipáhis of the Guard struck the wounded officers on the ground with the butt-ends of their muskets, and one fired his piece at them; and when Shekh Paltú called upon them to arrest the mutineer, they abused him, and said that if he did not release Manghal Pándi, they would shoot him. But he held the desperate fanatic until Baugh and the sergeant-major had escaped, and doubtless to his fidelity they owed their lives.

Meanwhile, tidings of the tumult had reached the quarters of

General Hearsey. An orderly rushed into the portico of his house and told him that the Brigade had risen. His two sons, officers of the Sipáhi Army, were with him; and now the three, having ordered their horses to be saddled and brought round, put on their uniform and accoutrements and prepared at once to proceed to the scene of action. It seemed so probable that all the regiments had turned out in a frenzy of alarm, that, whilst the horses were being saddled, Hearsey wrote hasty notes, to be despatched in case of need to the officers commanding the Europeans at Chinsurah and Damdamah, calling upon them to march down at once to his assistance. He had just sealed them, when first the Adjutant of the 43rd, smeared with the blood of the wounded officers, and then the Commandant of the Regiment, came up to report, in detail, what had happened. The story then told him was a strange one; for it seemed not that the Brigade, but that a single Sipáhi had risen, and was setting the State at defiance. It is hard to say whether the surprise or the indignation of the gallant veteran were greater, when he asked whether there was no one to shoot or to secure the madman. But it was plain that no time was to be lost. So mounting their horses, Hearsey and his sons galloped down to the parade-ground, and saw for themselves what was passing.

There was a great crowd of Sipáhis, mostly unarmed and undressed, and there were several European officers, some mounted and some on foot; much confusion and some consternation, but apparently no action. Manghal Pándi, still master of the situation, was pacing up and down, in front of the Quarter-Guard, calling upon his comrades in vehement tones, and with excited action, to follow his example, as the Europeans were coming down upon them, and to die bravely for their religion. But the crowd of Sipáhis, though none remembered at that moment that they were servants of the State, none came forward to support discipline and authority, were not ripe for open mutiny; and when Manghal Pándi reviled them as cowards, who had first excited and then deserted him, they hung irresolutely back, clustering together like sheep, and wondering what would happen next. The arrival of the General solved the question. As soon as he saw Manghal Pándi in front of the Quarter-Guard, he rode towards it, accompanied by his sons and by his Division-Staff, Major Ross, and when an officer cried out to him to take care, as the

mutineer's musket was loaded, answered, "Damn his musket!" and rode on to do his duty.

Little inclination was there on the part of the Jamadar and the men of the Guard to obey the General's orders; but the manner of Hearsey at that moment was the manner of a man not to be denied; and supported by his sons, each of the gallant Three with his hand upon his revolver, there was instant death in disobedience. So the Jamadar and the Guard, thus overawed, followed Hearsey and his sons to the place where Manghal Pándi was striding about menacingly with his musket in his hand. As they approached the mutineer, John Hearsey cried out, "Father, he is taking aim at you." "If I fall, John," said the General, "rush upon him and put him to death." But Manghal Pándi did not fire upon Hearsey; he turned his weapon upon himself. He saw that the game was up; and so, placing the butt of his musket on the ground, and the muzzle of the piece to his breast, he discharged it by the pressure of his foot, and fell burnt and wounded to the ground.

As he lay there convulsed and shivering, with his blood-stained sword beneath him, the officers thought that he was dying. But medical assistance came promptly, the wound was examined and found to be only superficial, so the wounded man was carried to the Hospital; and then Hearsey rode among the Sipáhis, telling them, as he had often told them before, that their alarms were groundless, that the Government had no thought of interfering with their religion, and that he saw with regret how lamentably they had failed in their duty, in not arresting or shooting down a man who had thus shown himself to be a rebel and a murderer. They answered that he was a madman, intoxicated to frenzy by bang. "And if so," said Hearsey, "why not have shot him down as you would have shot a mad elephant or a mad dog, if he resisted you." Some answered that he had a loaded musket. "What!" replied the General, "are you afraid of a loaded musket?" They were silent, and he dismissed them with scorn. It was plain that they had ceased to be soldiers.

Hearsey returned to his quarters that Sabbath evening, heavy with thought of the work before him. He had received his orders to execute the sentence that had been passed on the 19th Regiment. That sentence had now been publicly proclaimed in a General Order to the whole Army. On Tuesday morning, in the presence of all the troops, European and Native,

at the Presidency, the Barhámpúr mutineers were to be turned adrift on the world, destitute and degraded; and it was not to be doubted that they would carry with them the sympathies of their comrades in all parts of the country. That there was prospective danger in this was certain, for every disbanded Sipáhi might have become an emissary of evil; but there was a great and present danger, far too formidable in itself to suffer thoughts of the future to prevail; for it was probable that the 19th would resist their sentence, and that all the Native troops at the Presidency would aid them in their resistance. Some thought that the Barrackpúr Brigade would anticipate the event, and that on Monday there would be a general rising of the Sipáhis, and that the officers and their families would be butchered by the mutineers. The first blood had been shed. Manghal Pándi was only the fugleman. So many of the English ladies in Barrackpúr left the cantonment and sought safety for a while in Calcutta. But there was no place at that time more secure than that which they had quitted; and they found that the inmates of the asylum they had sought were as much alarmed as themselves.

It has been said that, halted at Bársat on the 30th of March, the 19th learnt what had happened on the preceding evening. The 34th had sent out their emissaries to meet their old friends and comrades of Lakhnao, to prompt them to resistance, and to promise to cast in their own lot with their brethren and to die for their religion. And this, too, it is said, with murderous suggestions of a general massacre of the white officers. But the 19th shook their heads at the tempters. They had expressed their sorrow for what had happened, and they had implored that they might be suffered to prove their loyalty by going on service to any part of the world. They had never at heart been mutinous, and they would not now rise against the Government whose salt they had eaten and whose uniform they had worn. But the bonds of a great sympathy restrained them from denouncing their comrades, so they suffered in silence the tempters to return to their own Lines.

As the morning dawned upon them, obedient to orders, they commenced the last march that they were ever to make as soldiers. Heavy-hearted, penitent, and with the remains of a great fear still clinging to them, they went to their doom. A mile from Barrackpúr Hearsey met them with his final orders, and

March 31, 1857.

Disbandment of the 19th N. I.

placing himself in front of the column, rode back with them to the parade-ground which was to be the scene of their disbandment. There all the available troops in the Presidency division, European and Native, were drawn up to receive them. Steadily they marched on to the ground which had been marked out for them, and found themselves face to face with the guns. If there had been any thought of resistance, it would have passed away at the first sight of that imposing array of white troops and the two field-batteries which confronted them. But they had never thought of anything but submission. Obedient, therefore, to the word of command, up to the last moment of their military existence, they listened in silence to the General's brief preliminary address, in silence to the General Order of Government announcing the sentence of disbandment; without a murmur, opened their ranks, piled their arms at the word of command as though they had been on a common parade, and then hung their belts upon their bayonets. The colours of the regiment were then brought to the front, and laid upon a rest composed of a little pile of crossed muskets. It was an anxious moment, for though the 19th were penitent and submissive, the temper of some of the other regiments, and especially of the 34th, was not to be trusted; and for a while it was believed that the men, who two days before had thrown off the mask, were prepared to fire upon their officers. The rumour ran that many of the Sipáhis of that guilty regiment were on parade with loaded muskets, and Hearsey was advised to prove them by ordering the regiment to spring ramrods. But he wisely rejected the advice, saying that all was going well, and that he would not mar the effect of the peaceable disbandment of the regiment by a movement that might excite a collision. He was right. The work that he had in hand was quietly completed. The men of the 19th were marched to a distance from their arms, and the pay that was due to them brought out for disbursement. They had now ceased to be soldiers; but there was no further degradation in store for them. Hearsey addressed them in tones of kindness, saying that, though the Government had decreed their summary dismissal, their uniforms would not be stripped from their backs, and that as a reward for their penitence and good conduct on the march from Barhámpúr, they would be provided at the public cost with carriage to convey them to their homes. This kindness made a deep impression upon

them. Many of them lifted up their voices, bewailing their fate and loudly declaring that they would revenge themselves upon the 34th, who had tempted them to their undoing. One man, apparently spokesman for his comrades, said, "Give us back our arms for ten minutes before we go; and leave us alone with the 34th to settle our account with them." *

Whilst the men of what had once been the 19th were being paid, Hearsey addressed the other Native regiments on parade, very much as he had addressed them before; but urging upon them the consideration of the fact that the 19th, in which there were four hundred Brahmans and a hundred and fifty Rajputs, had been sent to their homes, and were at liberty to visit what shrines they pleased, and to worship where their fathers had worshipped before them, as a proof that the report which had been circulated of the intention of Government to interfere with their religion was nothing but a base falsehood. The men listened attentively to what was said; and when the time came for their dismissal, they went quietly to their lines. It was nearly nine o'clock before the men of the old 19th had been paid up; and, under an European escort, were marched out of Barrackpúr. As they moved off, they cheered the fine old soldier, whose duty it had been to disband them, and wished him a long and a happy life; and he went to his house with a heart stirred to its very depths with a compassionate sorrow, feeling doubtless that it was the saddest morning's work he had ever done, but thanking God that it had been done so peacefully and with such perfect success.

* Lord Canning's reasons for sparing them the deeper degradation are thus given in a letter to General Anson: "I sent you a copy of the General Order yesterday. I have determined to omit the words which require that the men shall be deprived 'of the uniform which they have dishonoured.' Heavy as has been their crime—none heavier—it is not a mean or abject one: such as refusing to march to a post of danger; and the substance of their punishment is severe enough without being made to gall and rankle. It was for this reason that I did not originally prescribe that the number of the regiment should be removed from the Army List, or that the men should be turned out of cantonment ignominiously, as was done in the case of the 34th thirteen years ago. The abstaining from stripping their uniforms from them will be a further relaxation in the same spirit."—*MS. Correspondence.*

CHAPTER VI.

Barrackpúr, April, 1857.

Nor less thankful was Lord Canning, when tidings were brought to him at Calcutta that all had passed off quietly at Barrackpúr. He had sent one of his Aides-de-camp, Captain Baring, to witness the disbandment of the 19th, and to bring back to him, with all possible despatch, intelligence of the events of the morning. And now that good news had come, he telegraphed it at once to the Commander-in-Chief, and made it known throughout the city, to the intense relief of many frightened residents, who had anticipated a general rising of the Native troops, and the massacre of all the European inhabitants. For the moment, at least, the danger had passed; and a little breathing-time was permitted to Government. Now that the disbandment of the 19th had been effected, and the men were going quietly to their homes, there was leisure to think of the far greater crime of the 34th. The case of Manghal Pándi, who had cut down his officer, was one to raise no questionings. Nor, indeed, could there be much doubt about the Jamadar of the Guard, who had suffered such an outrage to be committed before his eyes. The former was tried by Court-martial on the 6th of April, and sentenced to be hanged; and on the 10th and 11th, the latter was tried, and sentenced to the same ignominious death. On the 8th, Manghal Pándi paid the penalty of his crime on the gallows, in the presence of all the troops, at Barrackpúr. But although without loss of time the Jamadar was condemned to be hanged, the execution lagged behind the sentence in a manner that must have greatly marred the effect of the example. A legal difficulty arose, which, for a while, held retribution in restraint,* and the men of the Brigade began to think that

* "The execution of a Native officer of his rank," wrote Lord Canning to the President of the Board of Control, "convicted by his brother officers, will have a most wholesome effect. Such a thing is quite unprecedented.

Government lacked the resolution to inflict condign punishment on the offender.

Nor was this the only apparent symptom of irresolution. The 34th had been more guilty than the 19th; but punishment had not overtaken it. The men still went about with their arms in their hands; and there was scarcely a European in Barrackpúr who believed that he was safe from their violence. As officers returned at night from their regimental messes, they thought that their own Sipáhis would fall upon them in the darkness, and social intercourse after nightfall between the ladies of the station was suspended.* All this was known and deplored; but it was felt, upon the other hand, that if there were evil in delay, there was evil also in any appearance of haste.† Mindful that the disaffection in the Sipáhi regiments had its root in fear, and believing that any undue severity would increase their irritation, the Governor-General caused all the circumstances of the excitement of the 34th to be sifted to the bottom, and hoped thereby to elicit information

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There has been a delay between the sentence and the execution which has vexed me, as it may give an appearance of hesitation to the proceedings of Government, which would be mischievous, and which never has existed for a moment. The delay was caused by the Commander-in-Chief not having given authority to General Hearsey, in his warrant, to carry out sentences against any but non-commissioned officers, and by an opinion utterly erroneous of the Judge-Advocate, who is with the Commander-in-Chief, that the authority could not be given. Hence nearly a week was lost, and with it something of the sharpness of the example."—*MS. Correspondence of Lord Canning.*

* It does not appear that any outrages were actually committed; but one night a Sipáhi appeared suddenly in a threatening attitude before a young officer, as he was on his way home, upon which, being a stalwart and brave fellow, the English subaltern knocked him down.

† A little later the Governor-General wrote: "The mutinous spirit is not quelled here, and I feel no confidence of being able to eradicate it very speedily, although the outbreaks may be repressed easily. The spirit of disaffection, or rather of mistrust, for it is more that, has spread further than I thought six weeks ago, but widely rather than deeply, and it requires very wary walking. A hasty measure of retribution, betraying animosity, or an unjust act of severity, would confirm, instead of allaying, the temper which is abroad. It is not possible to say with confidence what the causes are; but with the common herd there is a sincere fear for their caste, and a conviction that this has been in danger from the cartridges and other causes. This feeling is played upon by others from outside, and, to some extent, with political objects. But, upon the whole, political animosity does not go for much in the present movement, and certainly does not actuate the Sipáhis in the mass."—*Lord Canning to Lord Elphinstone, May 6, 1857.—MS. Correspondence.*

which might guide him to a right understanding of the matter. The regiment once disbanded, there would be no hope of further revelations. So all through the month of April their doom was unpronounced. Courts of Inquiry were being held for the purpose of ascertaining the general temper of the regiment. It appeared that for some time there had been a want of loyalty and good feeling in the 34th; that Native officers and Sipáhis had been disrespectful in their manner towards their English officers; and altogether there had been such a lack of discipline, that the officers, when questioned, said that if the regiment had been ordered on service they would have had little faith in the fidelity of the great bulk of the soldiery. And at last an opinion was recorded to the effect that "the Sikhs and Musulmans of the 34th Regiment of Native Infantry were trustworthy soldiers of the State, but that the Hindus generally of that corps were not to be trusted." So the Government took into deliberate consideration the disbandment of the Regiment, with the exception of those officers and soldiers who had been absent from Barrackpúr at the time of the outrage of the 29th of March, or who had at any time made practical demonstration of their loyalty and fidelity to the State.*

But before judgment was pronounced and sentence executed, there had been much in other parts of the country to disturb the mind of the Governor-General. He was a man of hopeful nature, and a courageous heart that never suffered him to exaggerate the dangers of the Future, or to look gloomily at the situation of the Present; but it was plain that the little cloud which had arisen at the end of January, was now, in the early part of April, rapidly spreading itself over the entire firmament. Already the sound of the thunder had been heard

* Three companies of the 34th had been on detachment duty at Chátgáon. No suspicion of disloyalty had attached to them, and when they heard of what had passed at Barrackpúr, they sent in a memorial, saying that they had heard with extreme regret of the disgraceful conduct of Manghal Pándi and the Guard; that they well knew that the Government would not interfere with their religion; and that they would remain "faithful for ever." If they were sincere, their sincerity must be regarded as an additional proof of the external agency that was, I believe, at the beginning of 1857, employed to corrupt the Sipáhis at the Presidency. It is a circumstance also to be noticed, that the very Subahdar of the Mint-Guard, who had arrested the Sipáhis of the 2nd Grenadiers, was accused, in the course of the inquiry into the conduct and temper of the 34th, of being a prime mover of sedition.

from distant stations beneath the shadow of the Himalayas, and it was little likely that, throughout the intervening country, there was a single cantonment by which the alarm had not been caught—a single Native regiment in which the new rifle and the greased cartridges were not subjects of excited discussion.

The Head-quarters of the Army were at that time at Ambálah, at the foot of the great hills, a thousand miles from Calcutta. There General Anson, having returned from his hasty visit to Calcutta, was meditating a speedy retreat to Simla, when the unquiet spirit in the Native regiments forced itself upon his attention. This station was one of the Depôts of Instruction, at which the use of the new rifle was taught to representative men from the different regiments in that part of the country. These men were picked soldiers, of more than common aptitude and intelligence, under some of the best Native officers in the service. The explanations of their instructors seemed to have disarmed their suspicions, and they attended their instruction parades without any sign of dissatisfaction. They had not advanced so far in their drill as to require to use the cartridges; and, indeed, the new ammunition had not yet been received from Mírath. But the Commander-in-Chief believed that the men were satisfied, until a circumstance occurred which loudly proclaimed, and ought to have struck home to him the conviction, that the great fear which had taken possession of men's minds was too deeply seated to be eradicated by any single measure of the Government, and too widely spread to be removed by any local orders. What solace was there in the assurance that no cartridges lubricated with the obnoxious grease had been, or ever would be, issued to them, if the cartridge-paper used by them were unclean? and even if their own minds were cleansed of all foul suspicions, what did this avail, so long as their comrades in the several regiments to which they belonged believed them to be defiled, and were, therefore, casting them out from the brotherhood?

Retrospect of events at Ambálah. March, 1857.

The 36th Regiment formed the escort of the Commander-in-Chief. There was a detachment from it in the Rifle Depôt; and it happened that one day, at the end of the third week of March, two non-commissioned officers from this detachment visited the regimental camp, and were publicly taunted by a Subahdar with having become Christians. They carried back

this story to the Depôt, and one of them, when he told it to Lieutenant Martineau, the Instructor, cried like a child in his presence, said that he was an outcast, and that the men of his regiment had refused to eat with him. A man of more than common quickness of intelligence and depth of thought, Martineau saw at once the terrible significance of this, and he pushed his inquiries further among the men of the Depôt. The result left no doubt upon his mind, that in every detachment there was the same strong feeling of terror, lest having used the new greased cartridges, or having been suspected of using them, they should become outcasts from their regiments, and shunned by their brethren on returning to their own villages. This was no mere fancy. Already had the detachments found their intercourse with their regiments suspended. They had written letters to their distant comrades and received no answers; and now they asked, not without a great show of reason, "If a Subahdar in the Commander-in-Chief's camp, and on duty as his personal escort, can taunt us with loss of caste, what kind of reception shall we meet on our return to our own corps? No reward that Government can offer us is any equivalent for being regarded as outcasts by our own comrades." Plainly, then, it was Martineau's duty to communicate all that he knew to the Commander-in-Chief, and being his duty, he was not a man to shrink from doing it. So he wrote at once to the Assistant-Adjutant-General, Septimus Becher, and told his story—privately in the first instance, but afterwards, at Becher's suggestion, in an official letter. But already had the Commander-in-Chief learnt also from other sources the feeling of consternation that was pervading the minds of the men of the Depôt. On the 19th of March the Subahdar had insulted the men of the detachment; on the 20th, Martineau wrote his first letter to Anson's Staff; on the morning of the 23rd the Commander-in-Chief was to inspect the Rifle Depôt; and on the previous evening a report reached him that the men of the detachments wished to speak to him, through their delegates, on parade. He determined, therefore, to take the initiative, and to address them. So, after the Inspection parade, he formed the detachments into a hollow square, and calling the Native officers to the front, within a short distance of his Staff, began his oration to the troops. He had not the advantage, which Hearsey enjoyed, of being able to address them fluently in their own language. But, if his discourse was therefore less

impressive, it was not less clear; for calling Martineau to his aid, Anson paused at the end of each brief sentence, heard it translated into Hindustáni, and asked if the men understood its import. It was thus that he spoke to them:

"The Commander-in-Chief is desirous of taking this opportunity of addressing a few words to the Native officers assembled at this Depôt, which has been formed for the instruction of the Army in the use of the new Rifle. The Native officers have been selected for this duty on account of their superior intelligence upon all matters connected with the service to which they belong. The Commander-in-Chief feels satisfied, therefore, that they will exercise that intelligence, and employ the influence which their positions warrant him in supposing they possess, for the good of the men who are placed under their authority, and for the advantage of the Army generally. In no way can this be more beneficially proved than in disabusing their minds of any mistaken notion which they may have been led to entertain respecting the intentions and orders of the Government whom they have engaged to serve. The introduction of a better arm has rendered it necessary to adopt a different system of loading it, and an improved description of cartridge. The Commander-in-Chief finds that, on account of the appearance of the paper used for the cartridges, and of the material with which they are made up according to the patterns sent from England, objections have been raised to their use by Sipáhis of various Religions and Castes, and that endeavours have been made to induce them to believe that it is the express object of the Government to subvert their Religion and to subject them to the loss of Caste on which they set so high a value.

Address of the Commander-in-Chief.

"A moment's calm reflection must convince every one how utterly groundless and how impossible it is that there can be the slightest shadow of truth in such a suspicion. In what manner or degree could the Government gain by such a proceeding? Can any one explain what could be the object of it? The Commander-in-Chief is sure that all will allow that nothing has ever occurred to j stify a suspicion that the Government ever wished to coerce the Natives of India in matters of Religion, or to interfere unnecessarily with their Customs, or even with the ceremonies which belong to their different Castes.

"The Commander-in-Chief regrets to hear that there have

been instances in the Army of the disbelief of the Sipáhis in the assurances of their officers that they would not be required to use cartridges which were made of materials to which they could reasonably object, and that they have acted in a manner which must destroy all confidence in them as soldiers, whose first duty is obedience to the Government whom they serve, and to their superiors. The Government will know how to deal with such instances of insubordination, and the Commander-in-Chief does not hesitate to say that they should be visited with the severest punishment.

"But the object of the Commander-in-Chief is not to threaten, and he hopes that it is unnecessary even to point out to those whose breasts are decorated with proofs of gallantry and good service, what is their duty. He wishes simply to assure them, on the honour of a soldier like themselves, that it has never been, and never will be, the policy of the Government of this great country to coerce either those serving in the Army or the Natives of India in their religious feelings, or to interfere with the customs of their Castes. He trusts to the Native officers who are present here to make this known to their respective regiments, and to exert themselves in allaying the fears of those who may have been momentarily seduced from their duty by evil-disposed persons. He is satisfied that they will do everything in their power to prevent the shame which must fall upon all who are faithless to the colours under which they have sworn allegiance to the Government, and that they will prove themselves deserving of the high character which they have always hitherto maintained in this Army."

The Native officers in front, who alone, perhaps, were enabled by their position to hear the address of the Chief, listened attentively and with a respectful demeanour to what was said; and when the parade was over, they expressed to Martineau, through the medium of three of their body acting as spokesmen, the high sense of the honour that had been done to them by the condescension of His Excellency in addressing them on parade. But they urged upon him that, although they did not themselves attribute to the Government any of the evil designs referred to in that address, it was true that for one man who disbelieved the story, there were ten thousand who believed it; that it was universally credited, not only in their regiments, but everywhere in their native villages; and that, therefore, although the men of the detachments were ready to a man to

use the cartridge when ordered, they desired to represent, for the paternal consideration of the Commander-in-Chief, the social consequences to themselves of military obedience. They would become outcasts for ever, shunned by their comrades, and discarded by their families, and would thus suffer for their obedience the most terrible punishment that could be inflicted upon them upon this side of the grave.* Martineau promised to represent all this to the Commander-in-Chief; and he did so in an official letter, through the legitimate channel of the Adjutant-General's office. The matter was weighing heavily on Anson's mind. He saw clearly what the difficulty was. "I have no doubt," he wrote on that day to the Governor-General, "that individually they (the men of the detachments) are content, and that their own minds will be set at rest; but it is the manner in which they will be received by their comrades, when they regain their regiments, that weighs upon my mind." But what was to be done? To remove from their minds all fear of the greased cartridges was only to drive them upon an equal fear of the greased paper, which it was still more difficult to remove.† He had thought at one time of

* Lieutenant Martineau to Captain Septimus Becher. The writer adds: "Their being selected as men of intelligence and fidelity thus becomes to them the most fatal curse: they will obey the orders of their military superiors, and socially perish through their instinct of obedience. That their views are not exaggerated, some knowledge of the Native character, and of the temper of the Native mind (non-military as well as military) at this present moment, tend to convince me. The Asiatic mind is periodically prone to fits of religious panic; in this state, reasoning that would satisfy us is utterly thrown away upon them; their imaginations run riot on preconceived views, and often the more absurd they are, the more tenaciously do they cling to them. We are now passing through one of these paroxysms, which we might safely disregard were not unfortunately the military element mixed up in it. What the exciting causes are that at this present moment are operating on the Native mind, to an universal extent throughout these provinces, I cannot discover; no Native can or will offer any explanation, but I am disposed to regard the greased cartridges, alleged to be smeared with cows' and pigs' fat, more as the medium than as the original cause of this widespread feeling of distrust that is spreading dissatisfaction to our rule, and tending to alienate the fidelity of the Native Army."

† "I am not so much surprised," wrote General Anson to Lord Canning on the 23rd of March, "at their objections to the cartridges, having seen them. I had no idea they contained, or rather are smeared with, such a quantity of grease, which looks exactly like fat. After ramming down the ball, the muzzle of the musket is covered with it. This, however, will, I imagine, not be the case with those prepared according to the late instructions.

breaking up the Depôt, and sending back the detachments to their regiments, on the ground of the advanced state of the season; but this would only, he argued on reflection, be a cowardly staving-off of the question, so he determined merely to direct that the drill instruction should not proceed to the point of firing until a special report should have been received from Mírath on the subject of the suspected paper.

To Lord Canning, it appeared that any postponement of the target practice of the drill detachments would be a mistake. It would be a concession to unreasonable fears, which would look like an admission that there was reason in them; so, having first telegraphed to Ambálah the substance of his letter, he wrote to General Anson, saying: "I gather that you are not decidedly in favour of this course, and certainly I am much opposed to it myself. The men, it seems, have no objection of their own to use the cartridges, but dread the taunts of their comrades after they have rejoined. These taunts will be founded, not on their having handled unclean grease, for against that the whole Army has been protected for many weeks past by the late orders, but upon suspicions respecting the paper. Now, although in the matter of grease the Government was in some degree in the wrong (not having taken all the precaution that might have been taken to exclude objectionable ingredients), in the matter of paper it is entirely in the right. There is nothing offensive to the Caste of the Sipáhis in the paper; they have no pretence for saying so. The contrary has been proved; and if we give way upon this point I do not see where we can take our stand. It may be, as

April 4, 1857.

But there are now misgivings about the *paper*, and I think it so desirable that they should be assured that no animal grease is used in its manufacture, that a special report shall be made to me on that head from Mírath, and until I receive an answer, and am satisfied that no objectionable matter is used, no firing at the depôts by the Sipáhis will take place. It would be easy to dismiss the detachments to their regiments without any practice, on the ground that the hot weather is so advanced, and that very little progress could be made, but I do not think that would be advisable. The question having been raised, must be settled. It would only be deferred till another year, and I trust that the measures taken by the Government when the objection was first made, and the example of the punishment of the 19th Native Infantry, and of the other delinquents of the 70th, now being tried by a general court-martial, will have the effect we desire." [It is probable that General Anson here referred to the trial of the men of the 2nd Grenadiers.]—*MS. Correspondence.*

you hope, that the detachments at Ambálah, being well-conditioned men, would not consider a compliance with their request as a giving way on the part of the Government, or as a victory on their own part. But I fear it would be so with their comrades in the regiments. When the detachments return to their Head-quarters, they would give an account of the concession they had obtained, which would inevitably, and not unreasonably, lead to the suspicion that the Government is doubtful of the right of its own case. It could hardly be otherwise; and if so, we should have increased our difficulties for hereafter—for I have no faith in this question dying away of itself during the idleness of the hot season, unless it is grappled with at once. I would, therefore, make the men proceed to use the cartridges at practice. It will be no violence to their own consciences, for they are satisfied that the paper is harmless; and it will, in my opinion, much more effectively pave the way towards bringing their several regiments to reason, whether the objections thereto felt are sincere or not, than any postponement. Moreover, I do not think that we can quite consistently take any other course after what has passed with the 19th Regiment; for, though the climax of their crime was taking up arms, the refusal of the cartridges has been declared to be the beginning of the offence. Neither do I like the thought of countenancing consultations and references between the men of a regiment upon matters in which they have nothing to do but to obey; and I fear that postponement would look like an acquiescence in such references." So it was determined that there should be no cowardly postponement of the evil day, and the detachments in the Musketry Schools were ordered to proceed, under the new regulations, to the end of their course of instruction.*

Whilst this letter was making its way to the foot of the Hills, General Anson, whose health had been severely tried, and who

* The orders issued from the Adjutant-General's office, in consequence of this decision, were, that the detachments should proceed to target practice, that they should choose and apply their own grease, and that they should pinch or tear off the end of the cartridge with their fingers. In the event of the men hesitating to use the cartridges, their officers were to reason with them, calmly in the first instance, and if the Depôt, after such an appeal to them, were to refuse to use the cartridges, more stringent measures were to be resorted to for the enforcement of discipline.—*Letter from Adjutant-General to General Hearsey.*

had long been looking anxiously towards the cool, fresh slopes of the Himalayas, betook himself hopefully to Simla. That paradise of invalids, he wrote to the Governor-General, was "looking beautiful, and the climate now quite perfect." "I heartily wish," he added, "that you were here to benefit by it." But it was not a time for the enjoyment of Himalayan delights. At both ends of that long line of a thousand miles between the great Presidency town and the foot of the Hills there was that which, as the month advanced, must have sorely disquieted the minds of the civil and military chiefs. There was the great difficulty of the 34th to disturb both the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief; and as time advanced, there came from other parts of the country tidings which, if they did not help them to fathom causes, brought more plainly before them the probable consequences of this great panic in the Sipáhi Army. Those significant fires, which had preluded the outbreak at Barrackpúr, were breaking out at other stations. At Ambálah especially, in the middle of the month of April, they had become frequent and alarming. The detachments in the Musketry Schools were now proceeding steadily with their target practice. They dipped their own cartridges into a mixture of beeswax and ghee, and seemed to be fully convinced and assured that no foul play was intended against them. But they did not escape the taunts of their comrades; and the nightly fires indicated the general excitement among the Native soldiery. The European barracks, the commissariat store-houses, the hospital, and the huts in the Lines, night after night, burst out into mysterious conflagration. It was the belief at Head-Quarters that these fires, made easy by the dry thatched roofs of the buildings, were the work partly of the Sipáhis of the regiments stationed there, and partly of those attached to the Musketry Depôt. The former still looked askance at the latter, believing that they had been bought over by promises of promotion to use the obnoxious cartridges, and, as a mark of their indignation, set fire to the huts of the apostates in their absence at drill. Upon this the men of the Musketry School retaliated, by firing the Lines of the regimental Sipáhis.* But the Courts

* "The night before last a fireball was found ignited in the hut of a Sipáhi of the 5th Native Infantry. The hut was empty, as the man is attached to the School of Musketry, and lives with them. On the following night the Lines of the 60th Native Infantry were fired, and five huts, with all the men's

of Inquiry which were held to investigate the circumstances of these incendiary fires failed to elicit any positive information; for no one was willing to give evidence, and nothing was done to put pressure upon witnesses to reveal the knowlege which they possessed.

Sir Henry Barnard.

At this time Sir Henry Barnard, an officer of good repute, who had served with distinction in the Crimea, commanded the Sirhind Division of the Army, in which Ambálah was one of the chief stations. He was a man of high courage and activity, eager for service, and though he had not been many months in the country, he had begun to complain of the dreadful listlessness of Indian life, and the absence of that constant work and responsibility which, he said, had become a necessity to him. "Cannot you find some tough job to put me to? I will serve you faithfully." Thus he wrote to Lord Canning in the last week of April, seeing nothing before him at that time but a retreat to Simla, "when the burning mania is over." Little thought he then of the tough job in store for him—a job too tough for his steel, good as was the temper of it. The Commander-in-Chief wrote from Simla that Barnard was learning his work. "It will take him some time," said Anson, "to understand the Native character and system." And no reproach to him either; * for nothing was more beyond the ordinary comprehension of men, trained in schools of European warfare, than Sipáhi character in its normal state, except its aberrations and eccentricities. Anson had been two years in India; but he confessed that what was passing at Ambálah sorely puzzled him. "Strange," he wrote to Lord Canning, "that the incendiaries should never be detected. Every one is on the alert there; but still no clue to trace the offenders." And, again, at the end of the month, "We have not been able to detect any of the incendiaries at Ambálah. This appears to me extraordinary; but it shows how close the combination is among the miscreants who have recourse to this mode of revenging what they conceive to be their wrongs, and how great the

property, destroyed. This was clearly an act of retaliation, for incendiaries do not destroy themselves."—*General Barnard to Lord Canning, April 24, 1857.—MS. Correspondence.*

* That Sir Henry Barnard thought much and wrote very sensibly of the Sipáhi Army, the defects of our Indian military system, and the causes of the prevailing disaffection, I have ample evidence in letters before me.

dread of retaliation to any one who would dare to become an informer." It showed, too, how little power we had of penetrating beneath the surface, and how great was the mistrust of the English throughout all classes of the Native soldiery. Let what might be the hatred and dissension among themselves, a common feeling still stronger closed their hearts and sealed their lips against their English officers.

Events at Mírath.

Day after day this fact became more and more apparent. To the most observant of our people it seemed at first that, although the ministers and dependents of the deposed Muhammadan ruler of Oudh might have been insidiously employed in the corruption of our Native soldiery, the alarm, and therefore the discontent among the Sipáhis, was for the most part an emanation of Hinduism. The inquiries into the state of the 34th Regiment at Barrackpúr had resulted in a belief that the Muhammadan and Sikh soldiers were true to their salt; and so strong was the impression that only the Hindus of the disbanded 19th were really disaffected, that, after the dispersion of the regiment, it was believed that the whole history of the mutiny, which had ruined them, might be gathered from the Musulman Sipáhis. But, although a sagacious civil officer was put upon their track, and every effort was made to elicit the desired information, the attempt was altogether a failure. Whether these first impressions were right or wrong, whether the mutiny was, in its origin and inception, a Hindu or a Muhammadan movement, will hereafter be a subject of inquiry. But, before the end of the month of April, it must have been apparent to Lord Canning that nothing was to be hoped from that antagonism of the Asiatic races which had ever been regarded as the main element of our strength and safety. Muhammadans and Hindus were plainly united against us.

From an unexpected quarter there soon came proof of this union. As the new Enfield rifle had been the outward and visible cause of the great fear that had arisen in the minds of the soldiery, it was natural that the anxieties of the Government should, in the first instance, have been confined to the Native Infantry. In the Infantry Regiments a very large majority of the men were Hindus; whilst in the Cavalry the Muhammadan element was proportionately much stronger.* But now there

* As a rule, the Muhammadans were better horsemen and more adroit swordsmen than the Hindus, and therefore they made more serviceable

came from Mírath strange news to the effect that a Cavalry regiment had revolted.

To this station many unquiet thoughts had been directed; for it was one of the largest and most important in the whole range of our Indian territories. There, troops of all arms, both European and Native, were assembled. There, the Head-Quarters of the Bengal Artillery were established. There, the Ordnance Commissariat were diligently employed, in the Expense Magazine, on the manufacture of greased cartridges. There, the English Riflemen of the 60th, not without some feelings of disgust, were using the unsavoury things. More than once there had been reports that the Sipáhis had risen at Mírath, and that the Europeans had been let loose against them. With vague but eager expectancy, the Native regiments at all the large stations in Upper India were looking in that direction, as for a signal which they knew would soon be discerned. Men asked each other what was the news from Mírath, and looked into the Native newspapers for the suggestive heading; for it was the cradle of all sorts of strange and disturbing stories. In this month of April its crowded Lines and busy Bazaars were stirred by indefinite apprehensions of something coming. Every day the excitement increased, for every day some new story, intended to confirm the popular belief in the base designs of the English, found its way into circulation. The emissary of evil, who, in some shape or other, was stalking across the country, was at Mírath in the guise of a wandering Fakir, or religious mendicant, riding on an elephant, with many followers. That he was greatly disturbing the minds of men was certain; so the Police authorities ordered him to depart. He moved; but it was believed that he went no farther than the Lines of one of the Native regiments.*

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troopers. It is stated, however, that in the 3rd Regiment of Regular Cavalry which led off the dance of death at Mírath, there were an unusual number of Brahmans.

* Compare following passage in the Mírath Narrative of Mr. Williams, Commissioner First Division: "All the rumours by which the minds of the Native soldiers were prepared for revolt, were industriously disseminated at Mírath, especially those regarding the use of polluting grease in the preparation of the new cartridges, and the mixture of ground bones in flour, by which, it was said, Government desired to destroy the religion of the people. One of the many emissaries who were moving about the country appeared at Mírath in April, ostensibly as a fakir, riding on an elephant with followers, and having with him horses and native carriages. The frequent visits of the

In no place was the story of the greased cartridges discussed with greater eagerness than at Mírath; in no place was there a more disturbing belief that this was a part of a great scheme for the defilement of the people. It was of little use to declare to them that not a single soldier would ever be required to use a cartridge greased by any one but himself, for the greasing of the cartridges was in their estimation only one of many fraudulent devices, and every one believed that the dry cartridges contained the obnoxious fat. So, in the beginning of the fourth week of April, the excitement, which for many weeks had been growing stronger and stronger, broke out into an act of open mutiny. The troopers of the 3rd Cavalry were the first to resist the orders of their officers. They had no new weapons; no new ammunition. The only change introduced into their practice was that which substituted the pinching or tearing off, for the biting off, the end of the cartridges which they used with their carbines. This change in the drill was to be explained to them on a parade of the skirmishers of the regiment, which was to be held on the morning of the 24th of April. On the preceding evening a report ran through cantonments that the troopers would refuse to touch the cartridges. The parade was held, and of ninety men, to whom the ammunition was to have been served out, only five obeyed the orders of their officers. In vain Colonel Carmichael Smyth explained to them that the change had been introduced from a kindly regard for their own scruples. They were dogged and obdurate, and would not touch the cartridges. So the parade was dismissed, and the eighty-five troopers of the 3rd were ordered for Court-martial.

The story of the ground bones.

All this made it manifest to Lord Canning that the worst suspicions were deeply rooted in the Sipáhi Army; and though he at all times maintained a calm and cheerful demeanour, he thought much and anxiously of the signs and symptoms of the troubled spirit that was abroad. There were many indications that these suspicions were not confined to the military classes, but were disquieting also the general community. Not only in Mírath, but also in many other parts of the country, there was

men of the Native regiments to him attracted attention, and he was ordered, through the police, to leave the place; he apparently complied, but, it is said, he stayed some time in the Lines of the 20th Native Infantry."—*Unpublished Records.*

a belief that the English designed to defile both Hindus and Muhammadans, by polluting with unclean matter the daily food of the people. It has been shown that a suspicion of a similar character was abroad at the time of the Mutiny at Vellúr.* Now the disturbing rumour, cunningly circulated, took many portentous shapes. It was said that the officers of the British Government, under command from the Company and the Queen, had mixed ground bones with the flour and the salt sold in the Bazaars; that they had adulterated all the ghí † with animal fat; that bones had been burnt with the common sugar of the country; and that not only bone-dust flour, but the flesh of cows and pigs, had been thrown into the wells to pollute the drinking water of the people. Of this great imaginary scheme of contamination the matter of the greased cartridges was but a part, especially addressed to one part of the community. All classes, it was believed, were to be defiled at the same time; and the story ran that the "bará sahibs," or great English lords, had commanded all the princes, nobles, landholders, merchants, and cultivators of the land, to feed together upon English bread.

Of these preposterous fables, the one which made the strongest impression on the public mind was the story of the bone-dust flour. That it was current in March at Barrackpúr is certain.‡ In the early part of April, a circumstance occurred which proved that the panic had then spread to the Upper Provinces. It happened that flour having risen to an exceptionally high price at Kánhpúr, certain dealers at Mírath chartered a number of Government boats to carry a large supply down the canal to the former place. When the first instalment arrived, and was offered for sale at a price considerably below that which had previously ruled in the Bazaars, it found a ready market; but

* *Ante*, p. 181. It was then said that the English had mixed the blood of cows and pigs with all the newly manufactured salt.

† This is the ordinary grease used for cooking purposes throughout India.

‡ It was brought to the notice of General Hearsey by a native anonymous letter, picked up at the gate of Major Matthews, who commanded the 43rd. The Major sent it to Hearsey's staff, describing it as "sad trash"; and Hearsey, in forwarding it to the Military Secretary, expressed regret that the contemptible production had not been burnt as soon as it was found. But History rejoices in the preservation of such contemptible productions. There are many such in my possession, but this is the earliest in date, and gives the most comprehensive account of the rumours circulated by our enemies.

before the remainder reached Kánhpúr, a story had been circulated to the effect that the grain had been ground in the canal mills, under European supervision, and that the dust of cows' bones had been mixed up with it, with the intention of destroying the caste of all who should eat it. Such a story as this, circulated in the Lines and the Military Bazaars of Kánhpúr, at once stopped the sale of the Mírath flour. Not a Sipáhi would touch it, not a person of any kind would purchase it, cheap as was the price at which it was obtainable in comparison with all the other supplies in the market. Rapidly spread the alarm from one station to another, and as tidings came of the arrival of imaginary boat-loads or camel-loads of flour and bone-dust, men threw away the bread that they were eating, and believed themselves already defiled.* Whether, as some said, this was a trick of the Kánhpúr grain merchants to keep up the price of flour, or whether the story had been set afloat under the same influences as those which had given so false a colouring to the accident of the greased cartridges, and had associated with all the other wild fictions of which I have spoken, cannot with certainty be declared. But, whatsoever the origin of the fable, it sunk deeply into men's minds, and fixed there more ineradicably than ever their belief in the stern resolution of the Government to destroy the caste of the people by fraudulently bringing, in one way or other, the unclean thing to their lips.

The story of the chapatis.

It fixed, too, more firmly than before in the mind of Lord Canning, the belief that a great fear was spreading itself among the people, and that there was more danger in such a feeling than in a great hatred. Thinking of this, he thought also of another strange story that had come to him from the North-West, and which even the most experienced men about him were incompetent to explain. From village to village, brought by one messenger and sent onward by another, passed a mysterious token in the shape of one of those flat cakes made from flour and water, and forming the common bread of the people, which, in their language, are

* Colonel Baird Smith to Mr. Colvin—Mr. Martin Gubbins to the same. "Once alarmed," wrote the latter, "they drink in the greatest follies. Bone-dust átah alarm has taken hold of men's minds at several of our stations, and Sipáhis, private servants, Zamindars attending Court, have flung away their roti (bread) on hearing that five camel-loads of bone-dust átah had reached the station."—*MS. Correspondence.*

called Chapátís. All that was known about it was, that a messenger appeared, gave the cake to the head man of one village, and requested him to despatch it onward to the next; and that, in this way, it travelled from place to place; no one refusing, no one doubting, few even questioning, in blind obedience to a necessity felt rather than understood. After a while, this practice became known to the functionaries of the English Government, who thought much of it, or thought little of it, according to their individual dispositions, and interpreted it, in divers ways, according to the light that was in them.* The greater number looked upon it as a signal of warning and preparation, designed to tell the people that something great and portentous was about to happen, and to prompt them to be ready for the crisis. One great authority wrote to the Governor-General that he had been told that the chapátí was the symbol of men's food, and that its circulation was intended to alarm and to influence men's minds by indicating to them that their means of subsistence would be taken from them, and to tell them, therefore, to hold together. Others, laughing to scorn this notion of the fiery cross, saw in it only a common superstition of the country. It was said that it was no unwonted thing for a Hindu, in whose family sickness had broken out, to institute this transmission of chapátis, in the belief that it would carry off the disease; or for a community, when the cholera or other pestilence was raging, to betake themselves to a similar practice. Then, again, it was believed by others that the cakes had been sent abroad by enemies of the British Government, for the purpose of attaching to their circulation another dangerous fiction, to the effect that there was bone-dust in them, and that the English had resorted to this supplementary method of defiling the people. Some, too, surmised that, by a device sometimes used for other purposes,† seditious letters were in this

* Mr. Ford, Collector of Gúrgaon, first brought it to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, Mr. Colvin, who issued circular orders on the subject to all the local officers in charge of districts. In the trial of the King of Dehli great pains were taken to extract from the witnesses, both European and Native, some explanation of the "Chapátí mystery"; but nothing satisfactory was elicited.

† In this manner communication was sometimes held with the inmates of our gaols. See the "Revelations of an Orderly," by Panjkauri Khán: "Suppose a prisoner is confined under the bayonet of Sipáhis, he must be permitted to eat bread. The preparer of food is bribed, and a short note is

manner forwarded from village to village, read by the village chief, again crusted over with flour, and sent on in the shape of a chapátí, to be broken by the next recipient. But whatsoever the real history of the movement, it had doubtless the effect of producing and keeping alive much popular excitement in the districts through which the cakes were transmitted; and it may be said that its action was too widely diffused, and that it lasted for too long a time, to admit of a very ready adoption of the theory that it was of an accidental character, the growth only of domestic, or even of municipal, anxieties.* Some saw in it much meaning; some saw none. Time has thrown no new light upon it. Opinions still widely differ. And all that History can record with any certainty is, that the bearers of these

put into a chapátí, or a sentence is written on a plate, and when the bread is taken up the prisoner reads what is written."

* The circulation of the chapátís commenced at the beginning of the year. "The year 1857," writes Captain Keatinge, "opened in Nimár by a general distribution of small cakes, which were passed on from village to village. The same, I am aware, has occurred all over Northern India, and has been spoken of as having been a signal for the disturbances which took place later in the year. At the time they appeared in Nimár, they were everywhere brought from the direction of Indúr. That city was at the time afflicted with a severe visitation of cholera, and numbers of inhabitants died daily. It was at that time understood, by the people in Nimár, and is still believed, that the cakes of wheat were despatched from Indúr after the performance over them of incantations that would ensure the pestilence accompanying them. The cakes did not come straight from North to South, for they were received at Bajanagar, more than half-way between Indúr and Gwáliár, on the 9th of February, but had been distributed at Mandlésar on the 12th of January. This habit of passing on holy and unholy things is not unknown at Nimár. When smallpox breaks out in a village, a goat is procured, a cocoa-nut tied to its neck, and it is taken by the chowkeedar to the first village on the road to Mandáta; it is not allowed to enter the town, but is taken by a villager to the next hamlet, and so passed on without rest to its destination." This last is the scripturally recorded scapegoat. With respect to the chapátís, consult also the report of Major Erskine, Commissioner of the Ságar and Narbadá territories: "So far back as January, 1857," he writes, "small wheaten cakes (chapátís) were passed in a most mysterious manner from village to village in most of the districts, and, although all took it as a signal that something was coming, nobody in the division, I believe, knew what it portended, or whence it came, and it appeared to have been little thought about except that in the money-market of Ságar it is said to have had some slight effect in bill transactions. I reported the matter to Government at the time, but even now it is a matter of doubt if the signal was understood by *any one*, or if it referred to the coming rebellion, though such is now the general opinion."

strange missives went from place to place, and that ever as they went new excitements were engendered, and vague expectations were raised.

Political intrigues.

That in all this there was something more than mere military disaffection was manifest to Lord Canning; but neither he nor his confidential advisers could clearly discern what it was. He had a general conception that evil-minded men, with strong resentments to be gratified by the ruin of the British Government, were sending forth their emissaries; but with the exception of the ministers of the dethroned King of Oudh, whom he had suspected from the first,* he could not individualise his suspicions. How was he to know, how was any Englishman, shut up all day long in his house, and having no more living intercourse with the people than if they were clay figures, to know what was passing beneath the surface of Native society? If anything were learnt at that time to throw light upon the sources of the great events that were to happen, it was by merest accident, and the full force of the revelation was rarely discernible at the time. It was remembered afterwards that, in the early part of this year, one man, a Maráthá by race, a Brahman by caste, of whom something has already been recorded in this narrative,

* In my mind there is no doubt of the activity, at this time, of the Oudh people at Garden Reach. The Sipáhis at Barrackpúr were induced to believe that, if they broke away from the English harness, they would obtain more lucrative service under the restored kingship of Oudh. I have before me some letters, original and translated, of a Jamadar of the 34th Regiment, which contain numerous allusions to the Future of the King's service. Take the following: "The 2nd Grenadiers said, in the beginning of April, 'We will go to our homes sooner than bite the blank ammunition.' The regiments were unanimous in joining the King of Oudh." "The Subahdars of the Quarter-Guard said, 'We have sided with the King of Oudh, but nothing has come of it.'" "Rámshai Lála said, 'It would have been well for us.'" This also has its significance: "Subahdar Madé Khan, Sirdar Khan, and Rámshai Lála said, 'The Faringhi Bétíchúts' (a vile term of opprobrium) 'are unequalled in their want of faith. The King of Lakhnao put down his arms, and the Government have given him no allowance. We advised the King to put down his arms. The treachery of the Government is unrivalled.'" Colonel Wheler said that the writer of these letters appeared to be affected in the head." It will be remembered that the Native officer who reported the coming massacre of Vellúr was also said to be mad. General Hearsey, sending on the correspondence to Government, said that there was "much method in his supposed madness"; and added, that "much important information on the whole cause and subject of this *supposed* Cartridge Mutiny might be elicited from him."—*MS. Correspondence.*

was displaying, in his movements, an unwonted activity, which created surprise, but scarcely aroused suspicion. This man was Dúndú Pant, commonly known as the Náná Sáhib, of Bhitur—the adopted son of the Peshwá, Báji Rao. He was not given to distant journeyings; indeed, he was seldom seen beyond the limits of his own estate. But in the early months of 1857, having visited Kalpi, he made a journey to Dehli, and, a little latter in the year, paid a visit to Lakhnao. It was in the middle of April that he started on this last journey. On the 17th of that month, Mr. Morland, then one of the Agra Judges, who shortly after the Peshwá's death had been Commissioner at Bhitur, and who had endeavoured to rescue from resumption a part of his pension, paid a visit to the Náná at that place. The wily Musulman Agent, Azim-úllah Khan, who had pleaded his cause in England, was with Dúndú Pant when the English gentleman was announced, and they talked freely together, as friends talk, no suspicion on the one side, and no appearance of anything unwonted on the other. All was outwardly smooth and smiling. The Maráthá was as profuse as ever in his expressions of respect and esteem; and when Morland took his departure, the Brother of Dúndú Pant told him that the Náná purposed to return the visit of the Sáhib next day at Kánhpúr. The next day happened to be Sunday, and Morland was anxious, therefore, to decline the visit; but the Náná Sáhib went to Kánhpúr, and again sent Bábá Bhat to the English gentleman to propose an interview. What he wished to say to the man who had been kind to him will now never be known, for Morland declined the meeting, on the plea that it was the Sabbath, and expressed regret that the Náná Sáhib should have made the journey to no purpose. To this the Brahman replied, that his brother was on his way to Lakhnao to visit one of the Nawábs. There was something in all this strange and surprising. An English nobleman, in the course of three or four months, might visit all the chief cities of Europe without anyone taking heed of the occurrence. But the nobility of India are little given to travelling; and the Náná Sáhib had rarely gone beyond the limits of Bhitur.* That,

* A different statement has, I know, been made and commonly accepted. It is the belief that the Náná Sáhib was frequently to be seen at Kánhpúr, riding or driving on the Mall, and mixing freely with the European residents of the place. But the truth is, he eschewed Kánhpúr, for the reason which

within so short a time, he should make these three journeys, was a fact to excite speculation; but he was held to be a quiet, inoffensive person, good-natured, perhaps somewhat dull, and manifestly not of that kind of humanity of which conspirators are made, so no political significance was attached to the fact. What likelihood was there, at that time, that such a man as Dúndú Pant, heavy and seemingly impassive, who had for some years quietly accepted his position, and during that time done many acts of kindness and hospitality to the English gentlemen, should suddenly become a plotter against the State? Had any one then said that it behoved the Government to mark the movements of that man, he would have been laughed to scorn as an alarmist. We never know in India how many are the waiters and the watchers; we never know at what moment our enemies, sluggish in their hatreds as in all else, may exact the payment of old scores which we have thought were long ago forgotten.

So Dúndú Pant, Náná Sáhib, passed on, about some business known to himself, utterly unknown to European functionaries, to Kalpi, on the banks of the Jamnah, to the great imperial city of Dehli, and to Lakhnao, the capital of Oudh. In the last of these places, when the Náná arrived, Henry Lawrence was diligently, with his whole good heart, striving to make right all that had gone wrong during the time of his predecessor. But again the handwriting on the wall traced those fatal words, "Too late." If he had but gone to Lakhnao when he had first offered to go, how different would all have been! It was on the 18th April that the Náná Sáhib started on his journey to Lakhnao. On that day Henry Lawrence wrote a long letter to the Governor-General, telling him that he had discerned signs of dangerous coalitions between the regular Sipáhi regiments, the irregulars taken into our service from the old Oudh Army, and the men of the Police battalions; symptoms also of intrigues on foot among some of the chief people of the city. There were many elements of trouble; and now they were beginning to develop themselves in a manner

Lakhnao.

induced his adoptive father, Báji Rao, to eschew it, namely, that a salute was not given to him on entering the cantonment. The person generally known in Kánhpúr as the "Náná" was not Dúndú Pant, but Náná Narain Rao, the eldest son of the ex-Peshwá's chief adviser and manager, the Subahdar Ramchandar Pant, who, after his master's death, resided at Kánhpúr and was on terms of social familiarity with many of the principal European residents.

significant of a general outburst of popular discontent. "This city," wrote Henry Lawrence on that 18th of April, "is said to contain some six or seven hundred thousand souls, and does certainly contain many thousands (twenty thousand, I was told yesterday) of disbanded soldiers, and of hungry, nay starving dependents of the late Government. This very morning a clod was thrown at Mr. Ommaney (the Judicial Commissioner), and another struck Major Anderson (Chief Engineer) whilst in a buggy with myself. . . . . The improvements in the city here go on very fast—too fast and too roughly. Much discontent has been caused by demolition of buildings, and still more by threats of further similar measures; also regarding the seizure of religious and other edifices, and plots of ground, as Hazúl or Government property. I have visited many of these places and pacified parties, and prohibited any seizure or demolition without competent authority. The Revenue measures, though not as sweeping as represented by the writer whose letter your worship sent me, have been unsatisfactory. The Talukdars have, I fear, been hardly dealt with; at least, in the Faizábád division some have lost half their villages, some have lost all." Such, stated here in the hurried outline of a letter from the spot, to be dwelt upon more in detail hereinafter, was the condition of affairs which, in the third week of April, the Náná Sáhib found in Lakhnao. He could have scarcely wished for any better materials from which to erect an edifice of rebellion.

By this Dúndú Pant, Náná Sáhib—by all who were festering with resentments against the English and malignantly biding their time, the annexation of Oudh had been welcomed as a material aid to the success of their machinations. It was no sudden thought, born of the accident of the greased cartridges, that took the disappointed Brahman and his Muhammadan friend to Lakhnao in the spring of this year of trouble. For months, for years indeed, ever since the failure of the mission to England had been apparent, they had been quietly spreading their network of intrigue all over the country. From one Native Court to another Native Court, from one extremity to another of the great continent of India, the agents of the Náná Sáhib had passed with overtures and invitations, discreetly, perhaps mysteriously, worded, to Princes and Chiefs of different races and religions, but most hopefully of all to the Maráthás. At the three great Maráthá families—the families of the Rájah of Satárah, of the Peshwá, of the Bhonslá—Lord Dalhousie

had struck deadly blows. In the Southern Maráthá country, indeed, it seemed that Princes and Nobles were alike ripe for rebellion. It was a significant fact that the agents of the great Satárah and Púná families had been doing their master's work in England about the same time, that both had returned to India rank rebels, and that the first year of Lord Canning's administration found Rangu Bápují as active for evil in the South as Azim-úllah was in the North; both able and unscrupulous men, and hating the English with a deadlier hatred for the very kindness that had been shown to them. But it was not until the crown had been set upon the annexations of Lord Dalhousie by the seizure of Oudh, that the Náná Sáhib and his accomplices saw much prospect of success. That event was the turning-point of their career of intrigue. What had before been difficult was now made easy by this last act of English usurpation. Not only were the ministers of the King of Oudh tampering with the troops at the Presidency, and sowing dangerous lies broadcast over the length and breadth of the land, but such was the impression made by the last of our annexations, that men asked each other who was safe, and what use was there in fidelity, when so faithful a friend and ally as the King of Oudh was stripped of his dominions by the Government whom he had aided in its need. It is said that Princes and Chiefs, who had held back, then came forward, and that the Náná Sáhib began to receive answers to his appeals.*

* By those who systematically reject Native evidence, all this may be regarded as nothing but unsubstantial surmise. But there is nothing in my mind more clearly substantiated than the complicity of the Náná Sáhib in wide-spread intrigues before the outbreak of the mutiny. The concurrent testimony of witnesses examined in parts of the country widely distant from each other takes this story altogether out of the regions of the conjectural. I speak only of the broad fact itself. With regard to the statement in the text, that the machinations of the Náná Sáhib were much assisted by the annexation of Oudh, I give the following, *quantum valeat*, from the evidence of a Native emissary detained and examined in Maisur in January, 1858. After giving a list of numerous princes and chiefs whom the Náná had addressed, this man said: "The Náná wrote at intervals, two or three months previous to the annexation of Oudh. But at first he got no answers. Nobody had any hope. After the annexation he wrote still more, and then the Saokars of Lakhnao joined in his views. Mán Singh, who is the Chief of the Púrbiah, or Púrdasi, joined. Then the Sipáhis began to make *tajwiz* (plans) among themselves, and the Lakhnao Saokars supported them. Until Oudh was annexed, Náná Sáhib did not get answers from any one; but when that occurred, many began to take courage and answer him. The plot among the

But whatsoever may have been its effect in remote places, it cannot be questioned that in the condition of Oudh itself after annexation there was that which must have gladdened the heart of every plotter against the State. Such men as Dúndú Pant and Azim-úllah Khan could not pass through the streets of Lakhnao without clearly seeing what was coming. What they saw and what they heard, indeed, pleased them so greatly, that they assumed a bold and swaggering demeanour, which attracted the attention of the English functionaries to whom they were introduced. For they made no secret of their visit; but went about openly in the public streets, with numerous attendants, and even sought the presence of the Commissioner. The Náná said that he had come only to see the sights of Lakhnao; so Henry Lawrence received him kindly, and ordered every attention to be shown to him by the authorities of the city. But his sojourn in Lakhnao was brief, and his departure sudden. He went without taking leave of the English functionaries, saying that business required his presence at Kánhpúr.*

Sipáhis first took place—the discontent about the greased cartridges. Then answers began to pour in. Guláb Sing, of Jamú, was the first to send an answer. He said that he was ready with men, money, and arms, and he sent money to Náná Sáhib, through one of the Lakhnao Saokars." The former part of this statement may be readily accepted; the latter must be received with caution.

* *Vide* Appendix, p. 454.

CHAPTER VII.

May, 1857.

The month of May, with its fiery heat and glare, and its arid dust-charged winds, found Lord Canning in Calcutta watching eagerly, but hopefully, the progress of events, and the signs and symptoms of the excitement engendered in men's minds by the great lie which had been so insidiously propagated among them. From the multitude of conflicting statements and opinions which reached him from different quarters, it was difficult to extract the truth; but taking a comprehensive view of all that was manifest to him, from the plains of Bengal to the hills of the Himalaya, he could not discern in those first days of May that the clouds were gathering around him denser and blacker than before. If there were any change, indeed, it was rather a change for the brighter and the better. At Barrackpúr there had been no more overt acts of mutiny. The Native regiments were doing their duty, sullenly, perhaps, but still quietly. At Damdamah the detachments in the Rifle depôt, under the new system of drill, were proceeding to ball practice without any visible signs of discontent. It was hoped, indeed, that the troops in the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta were yielding to the explanations and assurances which had been given to them, and slowly returning to reason. At the Rifle depôts also in the Upper Country the drill was quietly proceeding. At Siálkot, the detachments from the Native regiments in the Panjáb, Regular and Irregular, were firing the new pieces without a murmur. Sir John Lawrence went to that station, at the beginning of the month, "to see the new School of Musketry, as well as to judge with respect to the feeling among the Sipáhis;" and he wrote to Lord Canning that all were "highly pleased with the new musket, and quite ready to adopt it. They already perceive how great an advantage it will give them in mountain warfare." The officers assured him that no bad feeling had been shown, and he himself "could perceive no hesitation or

reluctance on the part of any of the Sipáhis." * From Ambálah, General Barnard wrote on the first day of the month, that he had reported to Head-Quarters that so far from any insubordinate feeling existing at that place, he had reason to be satisfied with the patience, zeal, and activity that the men had shown on the severe night-picket work necessitated by the incendiary fires. "I have no reason," he added, "to accuse the Sipáhi of causing these fires—no overt act has been elicited, and no instance of insubordination has occurred. The musket practice has been resumed with apparent good will and zeal. I have frequently attended it myself, and I will answer for it that no ill feeling exists in these detachments." †

Thus it was that, in the first days of May, there was apparent to the eyes of the Governor-General something like a lull; and it seemed that at the Rifle depôts, which were the great central points of danger, the difficulty had been tided over. From Mírath, too, no fresh tidings of disturbance came. The men of the 3rd Cavalry were being tried by Court-martial; and it did not appear that any of their comrades were about to follow their insubordinate example. There were circumstances that rendered it probable that the motives which had driven these men into mutiny were altogether of an exceptional character. So Lord Canning, in the early part of this month of May, was able to direct his thoughts to all parts of the country, and to fix them on many topics of Indian government and administration, as calmly and as philosophically as in the quietest of times. He was corresponding with Lord Elphinstone on the subject of the Treaty with Persia and the Expenses of the War; with Lieutenant-Governor Colvin on Education Grants and Female Schools, and the Dehli Succession—little thinking how that last question would soon settle itself; with Major Davidson, the Resident at Haidarábád, about the recognition of a successor to the Nizam (his Highness being nigh unto death from a surfeit of prawns); with Sir Richmond Shakespear, Resident at Barodah, on the Finances of the Gáikwár; and with Colonel Durand, the Governor-General's agent at Indúr, about the large amount of Native deposits in the Residency Treasury. Indeed, the current business of Government was but little interrupted. There was no fear in Government House.

* Sir John Lawrence to Lord Canning, May 4, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*
† Sir H. Barnard to Lord Canning, May 1, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

But, although at this time the Governor-General was cheerful and hopeful, and believed that the clouds of trouble would soon, by God's providence, be dispersed, he had some especial causes of anxiety. The dawn of the month of May found the 34th Regiment at Barrackpúr still awaiting its sentence. The Jamadar of the Quarter-Guard, Isrí Pandi, had been hanged on the 22nd of April, in the presence of all the troops, at Barrackpúr. He had confessed his guilt on the scaffold, and with his last breath had exhorted his comrades to be warned by his example.* It was believed that this public execution of a commissioned officer would have a salutary effect upon the whole Native Army. But the punishment of one man, though that punishment were death, could not wipe out the offence of the regiment, or vindicate the authority of the Government. The great defect of Lord Canning, as a ruler in troubled times, was an excess of conscientiousness. The processes by which he arrived at a resolution were slow, because at every stage some scruple of honesty arose to impede and obstruct his conclusions. On the score both of justice and of policy he doubted whether the prompt disbandment of the 34th would be right. It was certain that some companies were true to their colours, and he did not clearly see that all the rest were faithless. He had caused a searching inquiry to be made into the condition of the regiment, and he had hoped, up to the end of the third week of April, that all the requirements of the case might be satisfied by the dismissal of some of the more patent offenders. But the weight of military authority was strongly in favour of disbandment. General Hearsey, at Barrackpúr, was fully convinced that no measure short of this would produce the desired effect; and General Anson wrote earnestly from Simla urging the expediency of such a course. The whole question was fully and anxiously discussed in Council; and at last, on the 30th of

* There were many erroneous versions at the time of Isrí Pandi's speech from the scaffold. The words which he uttered, literally translated, were these: "Listen, Bahádur Sipáhis. In such a manner do not let any one act! I have behaved in such a rascally way to the Government, that I am about to receive my just punishment. Therefore, let no Bahádur Sipáhi behave in this wretched manner, or he may receive the same punishment." This is given on the authority of Colonel Mitchell of the 19th, who brought the prisoner from the Quarter-Guard of the 53rd to the foot of the gallows, and whose own impressions were confirmed by the three orderlies who accompanied him.

April, Lord Canning recorded a minute declaratory of his opinion that no penalty less general than disbandment "would meet the exigencies of the case, or be effectual as an example." But even then there were doubts with respect to the men who were to be exempted from punishment, and not until the 4th of May was the discussion exhausted and the order given for the disbandment of the regiment.*

Disbandment of the 34th.

Two days afterwards, in the presence of all the troops at Barrackpúr, of the detachments from Damdamah, and of the 84th (Queen's) from Chinsurah, the seven companies of the 34th, who had witnessed the great outrage of the 29th of March, were drawn up, before the sun had risen, to receive their sentence. There was to be no mitigation of their punishment, as in the case of the 19th; so when they laid down their arms, the uniforms which they had disgraced were stripped from their backs, and they were marched out of cantonments under an escort of Europeans. And thus a second time the number of the guilty 34th was erased from the Army List; and five hundred more desperate men, principally Brahmans and Rajputs, were cast adrift upon the world to work out their own schemes of vengeance.

Oudh.

In the quarter to which a large number of them made their way, as the 19th had made their way before them—in Oudh, the signs of approaching trouble increased. To no place, from one end of India to another, did the mind of the Governor-General, in this conjuncture, turn with more painful interest than to this newly-annexed province, the nursery of the Bengal Army. Henry Lawrence's letters to the Governor-General were wholly silent on the subject of the Náná's visit to Lakhnao. But they spoke of much that pressed heavily on his mind. Recognising so many causes of popular discontent in Oudh, and knowing well how large a portion of the Native Army was drawn from that province, he could not, at such a time, regard without much anxiety the demeanour of the Sipáhis around him. There was one regiment at Lakhnao, whose conduct, although it had been betrayed into no overt act of

* It is especially to be noted that a question arose as to whether the Jamadar of the Mint-Guard, who had apprehended the men of the 2nd Grenadiers (*ante*, page 389), should be exempted, as a faithful servant, or, on account of later revelations, condemned as a traitor. The decision was ultimately in his favour.

wrought upon by emissaries from the city, or whether any of the disbanded men of the 19th had, by this time, found their way to Lakhnao, is matter only of conjecture;* but as the month of May dawned upon them, they were ripe for rebellion —not only themselves prepared to resist, but eager to incite others to resistance. They had written a letter to the men of the 48th, urging them to rise for their religion; and no soothing explanations from their officers could induce them to shake off the mistrust which had fastened upon them. On the second day of the month the Brigadier rode out with his Staff to the Lines of the 7th, and found them "as obstinate as possible with regard to the cartridges."† Returning at nightfall to Lakhnao, he wrote at once to Lawrence, telling him the state of the regiment, and adding, "I think myself that this affair has been a long time brewing." The next morning‡ brought with it no consolation. The 7th were in a worse state than before. They had been sullen and obstinate on the preceding day. Now in a state of feverish excitement, violent, desperate, they assumed a menacing attitude, and talked openly of murdering their officers. It was obvious that a crisis was approaching, and that no time was to be lost; so Henry Lawrence, when he heard that the regiment was in this defiant and dangerous state, determined at once to disarm, and, if resisted, to destroy it. On that evening he moved up an over-

May 3.

* It has been stated that both the 19th and 34th were stationed at Lakhnao at the time of annexation; and it was believed that they were there first infected with rebellion. Henry Lawrence wrote that he had ascertained that in the 19th there must have been nearly seven hundred Oudh men. By this time, they had mostly found their way back to their native province.

† The official report said that the regiment "refused to bite the cartridges when ordered by its own officers, and again by the Brigadier." How it happened that, after the change introduced into the drill, the Sipáhis at Lakhnao were ordered to bite the cartridge at all, it is impossible to say. This did not escape Lord Canning, who, in a minute written on the 10th of May, said: "It appears that the revised instructions for the platoon exercise, by which the biting of the cartridge is dispensed with, had not come into operation at Lakhnao. Explanation of this should be asked." But the time for explanation was past. It was ascertained, however, that the new drill instructions were sent to the Oudh Irregular force in the middle of April.

‡ So difficult is the attainment of perfect accuracy in an historical narrative, that even Mr. Gubbins, whose work on the Mutinies of Oudh is the best and safest authority extant, says that these events, which he witnessed himself, happened on Sunday, the 10th of May.

whelming force of all arms to the parade ground of the 7th. The day was far spent when he commenced the march. "It was a ticklish matter," he wrote to Mr. Colvin, "taking the 48th down on Sunday night; but I thought that they were safer in our company than behind in cantonments. We had to pass for two miles through the city; indeed, Her Majesty's 32nd had four miles of it. I therefore hesitated as to moving after; but the moon was in its third quarter; and the first blow is everything. So off we started; and concentrated from four points, accomplishing the seven miles in about three hours." *

The moon had risen, bright in an unclouded sky, on that Sabbath evening, when Henry Lawrence, accompanied by his Staff, appeared with the Brigade before the lines of the 7th. The regiment was drawn up on parade, in a state of vague uncertainty and bewilderment, not knowing what would come of this strange nocturnal assembly. But when they saw the Europeans, the Cavalry, and the guns, taking ground in their front and on their flanks, the Native regiments being so placed as to destroy all hope of their aiding their comrades, the mutineers knew that their game was up, and that there would be death in further resistance. What might then have happened if the course of events had not been determined by an accident, cannot be distinctly declared. The mutinous regiment had obeyed the word of command, and some of the men had expressed contrition; but it happened that, by some mistake, an artilleryman lighted a port-fire. The guns were pointed towards the mutineers, and though Lawrence and his Staff were posted between them and the Artillery, and would probably have been swept away by the first round, the Sipáhis of the guilty regiment believed that the battery was about to open upon them. A panic then seized the 7th. First one man, then another, broke away from his comrades and fled, throwing down his arms as he went in the overwhelming consternation of the moment; and presently great gaps appeared in the line, and only a remnant of the regiment was left to obey the orders of the English officer. To these men, whilst the Cavalry went in pursuit of the fugitives Henry Lawrence rode up; and as they broke into exclamations of "Jai Kampani Bahádurko!"—"Victory to the great Lord Company!"—ordered them to lay

* Sir Henry Lawrence to Mr. Colvin, Lakhnao, May 6, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

down their arms, and to strip off their accoutrements. They obeyed without hesitation: and, an hour after midnight, the Brigade had returned to Lakhnao, carrying with it all the arms of the 7th, and escorting, under guards of the same force, the men who had so lately borne them. In the critical state of the other Native regiments, it was not thought wise to divide the Europeans.

Next day Henry Lawrence wrote to the Governor-General, saying, "The *coup* is stated to have had great effect in the city. But people go so far as to tell me that the 48th last night abused the 7th for running away, and said, that if they had stood, the 48th would not have fired. I don't believe one quarter of these reports." But, although there is always, in seasons of great popular excitement, a vast amount of exaggeration afloat, and Henry Lawrence, therefore, received with caution the stories that were brought to him, he was not one to disregard the signs of the times, and to close his eyes to the dangers that were surrounding him. As time advanced, these signs increased in significance. Some fifty of the ringleaders of the 7th Irregulars had been seized and confined, and a Court of Inquiry had been assembled to investigate the causes of the outbreak in that regiment; but little or nothing had been elicited. As at Ambálah, and other places, the mouths of the Sipáhis were sealed. They might contend among themselves, but in their reticence, when the English sought to probe their discontents, they acted as one man. Words were not forthcoming, but there was one form of expression, well known to the Native soldiery in times of trouble, to which they betook themselves, as they had before betaken themselves elsewhere, and thus gave utterance to the strong feelings within them. On the 7th of May, the lines of the 48th were burnt down. The fire commenced in the hut of the Subahdar who had given up the seditious letter addressed by the 7th Irregulars to the men of his regiment. There could be no doubt that it was the work of an incendiary. On the following day, Lawrence visited the scene of the conflagration, and found the men outwardly civil and respectful in their demeanour, but heavy and downcast at the thought of their loss of property. It was not easy to read the state of feeling which then existed in the Oudh Army, so vague and varied was it; but if any man could have rightly discerned it, Henry Lawrence was that man. For he had free intercourse with those who were most likely to be its exponents, and had the gift, so rare

among our countrymen, of inspiring confidence in the breasts of the people. After much communing with others and with himself, he came to the conclusion that the strongest feeling that held possession of the Sipáhi's mind was a great fear, that this fear had long been growing upon him, and that it had only culminated in his belief in the story of the greased cartridges.*

Of one of these conversations a record has been left in Lawrence's handwriting. It is so significant of the great fear that was then dominating the Army, that I give the passage as it stands. "I had a conversation," he wrote to Lord Canning, on the 9th of May, "with a Jamadar of the Oudh Artillery for more than an hour, and was startled by the dogged persistence of the man, a Brahman of about forty years of age, of excellent character, in the belief that for ten years past Government has been engaged in measures for the forcible, or rather fraudulent, conversion of all the Natives. His argument was, that as such was the case, and that as we had made our way through India, won Bharatpúr, Lahor, &c., by fraud, so might it be possible that we mixed bone-dust with the grain sold to the Hindus. When I told him of our power in Europe, how the Russian war had quadrupled our Army in a year, and in another it could, if necessary, have been interminably increased, and that in the same way, in six months, any required number of Europeans could be brought to India, and that, therefore, we are not at the mercy of the Sipáhis, he replied that he knew that we had plenty of men and money, but that Europeans are expensive, and that, therefore, we wished to take Hindus to sea to conquer the world for us. On my remarking that the Sipáhi, though a good soldier on shore, is a bad one at sea, by reason of his poor food, 'That is just it,' was the rejoinder. 'You want us all to eat what you like that we may be stronger, and go everywhere.' He often repeated, 'I tell you what everybody says.' But when I replied, 'Fools and traitors may say so, but honest and sensible men cannot think so,' he would not say that he himself did or did not believe, but said, 'I tell you they are like sheep;

* One of the earliest indications of this alarm appeared at Lakhnao, when an Assistant-Surgeon in the Hospital of the 48th inadvertently put a phial of medicine to his lips to test it. This was seen by the Sipáhis, and was believed to be a deliberate scheme to pollute them. Soon afterwards the house of the doctor was burnt to the ground by the Sipáhis of his regiment.

the leading one tumbles down, and all the rest roll over him.' Such a man is very dangerous. He has his full faculties, is a Brahman, has served us twenty years, knows our strength and our weakness, and hates us thoroughly. It may be that he is only more honest than his neighbours, but he is not the less dangerous. On one only point did he give us credit. I told him that in the year 1846, I had rescued a hundred and fifty Native children, left by our army in Kábul, and that instead of making them Christians, I had restored them to their relations and friends. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I remember well. I was at Lahor.' On the other hand, he told me of our making Christians of children purchased during famines. I have spoken to many others, of all ranks, during the last fortnight; most give us credit for good intentions; but here is a soldier of our own, selected for promotion over the heads of others, holding opinions that must make him at heart a traitor." On the same day he wrote, in a similar strain, to Mr. Colvin, concluding with a significant hint to look well after the safety of the Forts in Upper India.*

If these letters from the Chief Commissioner of Oudh had been read when written, they might suggested grave thoughts of impending danger; but when they reached their destinations, they came only as commentaries upon the past, faint and feeble as seen by the glaring light of terrible realities. The Governor-General and his colleagues in the Supreme Council were discussing the conduct of the mutinous Oudh regiment, and the measure of punishment which should be meted out to it. On the 10th of May Lord Canning and Mr. Dorin recorded minutes on the subject. The Governor-General declared for disbandment. Roused to a vigorous expression of opinion by this last manifestation of a growing evil, the senior member of Council wrote—and wrote well—"The sooner this epidemic of mutiny is put a stop to the better. Mild measures won't do it. A severe example is wanted. . . . . . I am convinced that timely severity will be leniency in the long run." On the same day, General Lowe recorded a minute, in which he expressed an

* In the letter to Mr. Colvin, Sir Henry Lawrence says that the Jamadar "went over all our anti-Hindu acts of the last ten years, including Gaol-Messing, the General-Service Oath, &c., and did not conceal not only that he and all others saw no absurdity in the *ground-bones átah* belief, but that he considered we were quite up to such a dodge."—*MS. Correspondence.*

opinion that "probably the main body of the regiment, in refusing to bite the cartridge, did so refuse, not from any feeling of disloyalty or disaffection towards the Government or their officers, but from an unfeigned and sincere dread that the act of biting them would involve a serious injury to their caste." On the 11th, Mr. Grant and Mr. Peacock placed on record their opinions, that it might be better to wait for fuller information before issuing the final orders of Government. On the 12th, the office boxes were again passing from house to house; but with the papers then circulated, there went one, small in size, scanty in words, but, although perhaps scarcely appreciated at the time, of tremendous significance. "It is to be hoped," wrote Mr. Dorin, "that the news from Mírath (in the telegraphic message from Agra in this box) is not true." But it was true; yet, with all its terrors, only a small part of the truth.

The outbreak at Mírath, May 10, 1857.

The little paper, then, on that 12th of May, travelling from house to house in the office-box, was a telegraphic message from Lieutenant-Governor Colvin, announcing to Lord Canning that the great military station of Mírath was in a blaze, that the Cavalry had risen in a body, and that every European they had met had been slain by the insurgents. There was something terribly significant in the very form of this message. The Government at Agra had received no official tidings of the events that had occurred at Mírath. But a lady at the former place, who had been about to pay a visit to her friends at Mírath, had received a message from her niece, who was sister of the postmaster there, warning her not to attempt the journey, as the Cavalry had risen.* This was the last message despatched. Before the authorities could send intelligence of what had happened, the telegraph-wires were cut by the insurgents.

* The following were the words of the message: "*May* 11, 1857.—Last night, at nine o'clock, a telegraph message was received here by a lady from her niece, sister of the postmaster at Mírath, to the following effect: 'The Cavalry have risen, setting fire to their own houses and several officers' houses, besides having killed and wounded all European officers and soldiers they could find near the Lines. If aunt intends starting to-morrow evening, please detain her from doing so, as the van has been prevented from leaving the station.' No later message has been received, and the communication by telegram has been interrupted: how, not known. Any intelligence which may reach will be sent on immediately."—*Published Correspondence. Parliamentary Papers.*

The week of telegrams.

The news, therefore, which now reached Agra, and was thence communicated to Calcutta, was of a vague, fragmentary character. Scattered facts welled up from uncertain sources, and were passed on from one station to another, suggestive rather than expressive, always indicating something more terrible in the background than the truth actually revealed. Not till some time afterwards was the whole truth apparent to the Governor-General, and therefore not now do I fill up the outlines of the story. The week that followed the 12th of May was a week of telegrams. The electric wires were continually flashing pregnant messages from North to South, and from South to North. That the Sipáhis at Mírath had risen, was certain from the first. Then news came that they held some part of the road between Mírath and Dehli. Then, little by little, it transpired that the Mírath mutineers had made their way in a body to the Imperial City, and that the Dehli regiments had fraternised with them. A message from Agra, despatched on the 14th, stated, on the authority of a letter from the King of Dehli, that the town and fort and his own person were in possession of the insurgents; and it was added that Fraser, the Commissioner, and many other English gentlemen and ladies, had been murdered. Then, at last, it became apparent that the King himself had cast in his lot with the insurgents, that the rebel standard had been hoisted in the palace of the Mughul, that Englishmen and Englishwomen had been ruthlessly massacred in the streets of the city, and that the mutiny of a few regiments, by thus concentring at Dehli, was beginning to simulate a national rebellion.

Never since, a century before, the foundation of our great Indian Empire had been laid by the conquest of Bengal, had such tidings as these been brought to the council-chamber of the English ruler. The little cloud no bigger than a man's hand, which had risen in the first month of the new year, and had been growing in its density and darkness until it had overshadowed the heavens, was now discharging its tempestuous terrors upon us. There was little before the eyes of Lord Canning but the one naked fact of the junction of the Mírath and Dehli troops, and the proclamation of the restored empire of the Mughul. With a feeling of wondering anxiety he awaited, all through that terrible week in May, the details which seemed as though they would never come, and the explanations of all that seemed so inexplicable to him. Most of

all, he marvelled what our people had been doing, or not doing, in this conjuncture, that such a post as Dehli, scarcely equalled in military, wholly unequalled in political importance, should thus in an hour have been wrested from their grasp. It seemed incredible that with a regiment of British Cavalry at Mírath, and the largest body of Artillery in the country gathered there at its head-quarters, such a catastrophe as this should have occurred. Was there no one, he asked, to do with the Carabineers and the Horse Artillery what Gillespie, half a century before, had done with his Dragoons and galloper-guns? But if such were the result in places where our English officers had Cavalry and Artillery to aid them, how would it fare with them at stations where no such help was to be had? There was no hope now that the conflagration would not spread from cantonment to cantonment; no hope now that the whole country would not soon be in a blaze.

Measures of Lord Canning.

So Canning arose, and with his still, calm face, confronted the dire calamity. A braver heart than his never beat in a human breast. Happy was it for the nation that in him, to whom its honour was confided in that conjuncture, there was a resolute manhood of the finest, most enduring temper. Many thoughts pressed upon him, but dominant over all was a strong sense of the paramount duty of maintaining before all men a serene aspect and a confident demeanour. There was great work to be done, nothing less than the salvation of an empire; and with a solemn sense of his responsibility, he girded himself up for the conflict, knowing in how great a measure the deliverance of his countrymen depended, under God's good providence, upon their faith in his constancy and courage. He saw clearly that there was a tremendous danger, and he knew that the resources immediately at his command were wholly insufficient to enable him to cope with it; but even those who were nearest to his person never saw him quail for a moment, as he calculated the means and appliances of defence that could at once be brought into action, and those which might be summoned from a distance.

It was no time for lamentation; else he might have lamented that India, by a series of adverse circumstances, had been so stripped of European troops that now the whole country, with the exception of the frontier province of the Panjáb, was lying naked and defenceless, without means of raising any

barriers of resistance against the flood of rebellion that was pouring over Hindustan. He had lifted up his voice against the system, which placed it in the power of England, by giving to India either too much or too little of its manhood, to sacrifice the interests of the dependency.* He had resisted, only a little time before, an attempt to carry off some of the few English regiments at his disposal, to take a part in certain military operations against the Government of China, with which India had no concern. It had cost him much to send so many regiments to Persia; but that was a call to which he had been bound to respond, and happily now the emergency was past. All that he had said by way of warning had been more than verified by the event; but it was time for looking forward, not for looking back, so he began to reckon up his available succours, and forthwith to summon them to the capital.

In the midst of all his tribulation there were some sources of unspeakable comfort. Whilst the clouds were thickening above him, before the great outburst, he had learnt with joy and gratitude that the war with Persia had been brought to a close. Outram had done his work rapidly and well. I cannot now pause to speak of his successes. What he did on the shores of the Persian Gulf must be narrated in another place. It is enough to say that Persia, alarmed by our demonstrations on the coast, and anticipating an advance into the interior of the country, thought that negotiation was better than war, acceded to our demands, and concluded, at Paris, a treaty with the British Government. The expedition which had gone forth from Bombay, was, therefore, returning to that Presidency; and a word from the Governor-General would summon it, as fast as steam could bring it, to his aid. This was his first thought, when the seizure of Dehli confirmed all his worst apprehensions of the perilous want of European troops. Then, from these Persian succours, he turned with joy and gratitude not less profound, to the thought that English troops were speeding to

* "The interests of India," he wrote on April 22nd, "do not always make themselves heard in England, when other important matters are uppermost; and I am opposed to putting into the hands of the Government at home an increased power to diminish our main strength here for the purpose of meeting exigencies elsewhere. Such a diminution was made in 1854 by withholding two regiments which have not yet been given, although six regiments have been sent out of India to Persia."—*MS. Correspondence of Lord Canning.*

China; that the arrogance and insolence of the Chinese Government having provoked our chastisement, an expedition had been fitted out under the conduct of a civil and a military chief, and was then, perhaps, at the very point of its journey at which it might most readily be wrested from its original purpose, and diverted into another and more necessitous channel. Rightly taking the measure of the two exigencies, and never doubting for a moment what the great interests of the nation demanded in that conjuncture, he presently determined to call these troops to his aid. The chastisement of China could wait; the salvation of India could not; * and so he resolved, even at the risk of frustrating the cherished designs of the Government in England, to call upon Elgin and Ashburnham to suspend their operations, and to send him the present help that he so much needed. It was a great responsibility, but he took it without a moment's hesitation on himself; and he thanked God, from the very depths of his heart, that by a providential dispensation this succour, in the very crisis of his necessities, had been placed within his reach.

There were thus, in the peculiar circumstances of the moment, some sources of consolation, some good promise of relief over and above that which was to be sought in the normal condition of the empire under his charge. But it would take time to gather up the strength of these Persian and Chinese expeditions, and there were some available European troops more nearly at hand. It was another happy accident that at this time the 84th Regiment, which had been summoned from Pegu in March, was still in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. The long-delayed disbandment of the guilty companies of the 34th had not been carried into effect before the 6th of May; and the regiment had been detained until after the execution of the

* I did not think, when I wrote these words, that I had done more than express the natural feeling in Lord Canning's breast at that time; but I have since found that he gave utterance almost to the very words: "I have sent an officer," he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, "to Galle by the mail to meet Ashburnham, and hope Elgin, with an earnest request for the first use of the regiments bound to China, if they can be stopped at Singapore. Yeh may wait; but Bengal, with its stretch of seven hundred and fifty miles from Barrackpúr to Agra, guarded by nothing but the 10th Queen's, cannot wait, if the flame should spread And who shall say that it will not? No precaution against such a contingency can be too great."—*MS. Correspondence of Lord Canning.*

sentence. It seemed then that there was no further necessity for its presence in Bengal, but the arrangements for its return to Pegu were still incomplete, when the disastrous tidings from Upper India came to dissipate all thought of its departure. From the quarter whence it had come another English regiment might be drawn. The 35th was stationed partly at Rangún, partly at Moulmein; and a steamer was despatched to gather up the detachments and to bring them with all speed to Calcutta. At the same time, the telegraph carried to Madras a requisition to hold the 43rd Foot and the Madras Fusiliers ready for immediate embarkation; and a trusted officer was sent on board the mail-steamer to Ceylon, with an urgent request to the Governor to send him all the European troops he could spare.

Whilst thus every effort was strained to bring European troops from the southern and eastern coasts, the Governor-General was intent also on the organisation of measures for the concentration of the strength already at his disposal upon the points most exposed to danger. With this object, every available river steamer was taken up for the conveyance of troops to the Upper Provinces, and the quicker but more limited means of locomotion afforded by wheeled carriages was resorted to for the conveyance of small detachments into the interior. But it was not, in the crisis of this first peril, from the South, but from the North, that the stream of conquest was to be poured down upon the great centre of rebellion. It was not to be doubted that General Anson, whom the news of the rising at Mírath and the seizure of Dehli must have reached at Simla as soon as it reached Lord Canning at Calcutta, was doing all that could be done to despatch troops to the seat of the revolt. The telegraph, therefore, expressed only the confidence of Government that the Commander-in-Chief was bringing down to the plains the European regiments on the hills. But the main reliance of the Governor-General in this extremity was upon the military resources of the Panjáb. Though all the rest of the empire was denuded of European troops, there was no lack of this material strength in the great frontier province conquered from the Sikhs. Moreover, it was believed that the Sikhs themselves would be eager to follow their English commanders to the siege and pillage of the renowned city of the Mughuls. So, whilst a message went to Karáchí, in Sindh, directing the Commissioner to send an English regiment to the Panjáb to replace any that it might be found necessary to des-

patch from that province to the Lower Provinces, another went to Mr. Colvin, at Agra, saying, "Send word as quickly as possible to Sir John Lawrence that he is to send down such of the Panjáb regiments and European regiments as he can safely spare. Every exertion must be made to regain Dehli. Every hour is of importance. General Hewitt has been ordered to press this on the Commander-in-Chief. If you find it necessary, you may apply, in the Governor-General's name, to the Rájah of Patiálá and the Rájah of Jhínd for troops." And he added, with that union of kindliness and sagacity which made him at all times liberal of his encouragement to his Lieutenants, "I thank you sincerely for what you have so admirably done, and for your stout heart." * The praise, too, was well deserved. Colvin, at that time, had done all that could be done to help others at a distance, and to maintain the confidence of those around him, and he had strenuously exerted himself to forward to the Governor-General, by telegraph and by letter, all the tidings that had made their way to Agra.† "I have fairly taken upon myself," he wrote to Lord Canning on the 15th of May, "the position of Commander-in-Chief here. The arrangements are now on the point of completion, and our position may be regarded as safe. There has been a thorough co-operation and the most excellent spirit amongst us. Sindhiá and Bharatpúr will be heartily with us against the new dynasty of the House of Taimur. I shall rouse the Rajput States to arrest the flight of the mutineers westward, when they are driven out of Dehli. The horrible murders, you will see, have been chiefly by Muhammadan troopers of the 3rd Cavalry. There must be a fit and fearful expiation for such atrocities."

But for this fit and fearful expiation Lord Canning knew too well that the time had not yet come. The struggle now was for bare life. For this he had done all that could be done,

* In a letter to Mr. Vernon Smith of about the same date, Lord Canning says: "South of Dehli, Colvin at Agra is engaged in keeping the roads quiet, collecting troops from Gwáliár (Sindhiá has come forward loyally), and encouraging his own native garrison to fidelity. He is confident of keeping them straight, and he deserves to succeed. His courage and judgment are beyond praise."—*MS. Correspondence of Lord Canning.*

† The importance of this service, at a time when communication both by Post and Telegraph was so greatly interrupted, can hardly be over-estimated. The Commander-in-Chief's letters of the 14th and 16th of May did not reach Calcutta before the 7th of June.

with the scanty means at his own disposal. "The two points to which I am straining," he wrote to the Indian Minister at home, "are the hastening of the expulsion of the rebels from Dehli, and the collection of Europeans here to be pushed up the country." But not a day was to be lost in summoning that ulterior aid, by which not only was the safety of the empire to be secured, but the honour of the nation vindicated by the infliction of just retribution upon our enemies. The succours from Bombay he was sure to obtain; and there was something exhilarating in the thought, at a time when India had need of all her heroes, that Outram would come with them. How different would it have been if those regiments had been still engaged in the Persian Gulf! But he could not calculate with the same amount of certainty upon the succours from the Eastern seas; he could not be certain that Lord Elgin would respond to his appeal. All that he could do was to throw the whole earnestness of his nature into that appeal, and to take upon himself the full responsibility of the diversion. So he wrote officially, as the Governor-General of India, to Lord Elgin, and he wrote privately to him as an old companion and friend. In the public letter, after setting forth in emphatic language the dangers by which our empire in India was surrounded, he continued: "I place the matter briefly before your Lordship; but I hope clearly enough to enable you to come to a ready decision. I will add, that I am anxious to bear the whole responsibility of all the consequences of turning aside the troops from China to India. But I beg your Lordship to believe that, in saying this, I am not influenced by any thought that whatever may be the course for which your Lordship's wise judgment shall decide, you will need any help from me in vindicating it to her Majesty's Government."

Arrest of the China expedition.

More earnest and emphatic still was his private letter; not a word of it should be omitted: "My dear Elgin,—I wish I could give you a more cheerful and acceptable greeting than you will find in the letter by which this is accompanied. As it is, you will not bless me for it, but the case which I have before me here is clear and strong. Our hold of Bengal and the Upper Provinces depends upon the turn of a word—a look. An indiscreet act or irritating phrase from a foolish commanding officer at the head of a mutinous or disaffected company, may,

May 19, 1857.

whilst the present condition of things at Dehli lasts, lead to a general rising of the Native troops in the Lower Provinces, where we have no European strength, and where an army in rebellion would have everything its own way for weeks and months to come. We have seen within the last few days what that way would be. I cannot shut my eyes to the danger, or to the urgent necessity under which I lie, to collect every European that can carry arms and aid to the Government of India in the event of such a crisis. I do not want aid to put down the Mírath and Dehli rebels; that will be done easily, as soon as the European troops can converge upon Dehli, but not sooner. Meanwhile every hour of delay—unavoidable delay—is an encouragement to the disaffected troops in other parts; and if any one of the unwatched regiments on this side of Agra should take heart and give the word, there is not a fort, or cantonment, or station in the plains of the Ganges that would not be in their hands in a fortnight. It would be exactly the same in Oudh. No help that you could give me would make us safe against this, because it cannot arrive in time. The critical moments are now, and for the next ten or twelve days to come. If we pass through them without a spread of the outbreak, I believe all will go well. If we do not, the consequences will be so frightful, that any neglect to obtain any possible accession of strength whereby to shorten the duration of the reign of terror which will ensue, would be a crime. If you send me troops, they shall not be kept one hour longer than is absolutely needed. If you come with them yourself, you shall be most heartily welcome." MS. Correspondence.

With this letter went another to General Ashburnham, who commanded the troops of the China expedition; and the steamer, which carried the bearer of these important missives to Galle, bore also letters from the Governor-General to the Chairman of the Court of Directors and the President of the Board of Control, calling upon them immediately to send out reinforcements from England. "Now let me beg your attention and support," he wrote to Mr. Mangles, "to a proposal which goes to you by the mail for the immediate raising of three European regiments for Bengal. No sane man will doubt that much of increase to our European force is wanted, and that the want should be supplied with as little delay as possible is obvious from the present exposure of our weak points. I do

not ask for an augmentation to the established number of Queen's troops, because for permanent purposes I much prefer an addition to the Company's Army; and for the exigencies of the moment no reinforcement, except that of the China regiments, would avail. But I do beg that you will move the Government to make up the complement of Queen's troops, irrespectively of those which now or hereafter may come to us from China. Do not let the supply of the missing regiments depend upon the turn of affairs in China, but let the gap be filled up at once." * In the same strain he wrote to Mr. Vernon Smith, looking rather to any aid that might be sent him from England, as a means of preventing the recurrence of like disasters in the future, than of combating those which had already arisen.

Moral force appeals.

Whilst the first efforts of the Governor-General were thus directed towards the pressing duty of extinguishing, by sheer animal strength, the fires that had been kindled in Upper India, he was endeavouring also to prevent by moral means the flames from spreading to parts of the country not yet in a blaze. It was plain that a great fear, born of a terrible misapprehension, was driving the soldiery to madness. Might not something, then, be done—might not some authoritative declaration be put forth by Government, solemn and irresistible in its denials of the imputed treachery, to pacify men's minds, and to cast out from them the foul suspicions which were turning loyal soldiers into rebels and murderers? It was true that they had been told this before by the Governor-General, by the Commander-in-Chief, by Generals of Division, and Regimental Commandants; but these appeals had been of local character and limited influence, and it was thought that something might yet be done by a general Proclamation addressed to the whole Army, and distributed throughout the country. It was not doubted that whatsoever might have been the external agencies employed to keep alive this perilous excitement, there was at the bottom of it, in the breasts of the Sipáhis, a deeply-rooted fear for the sanctity of their religion and the purity of their caste. If they could once be persuaded to believe that the British Government had never meditated any injury or offence to the religious or social prejudices of the people, there might be a return to quietude and to reason. It

* Lord Canning to Mr. Mangles, May 19, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

was wise, at least, to make one more trial. So a Proclamation was issued, setting forth that the Governor-General knew that endeavours had been made to persuade Hindus and Musulmans, both soldiers and civil subjects, that their religion was openly as well as secretly threatened by acts of the Government, who were believed to be seeking by various ways to entrap them into loss of caste for purposes of their own; but that they had never yet deceived their subjects, and they now, therefore, called upon all men to refuse their belief to the seditious lies of designing traitors, who were leading good men to their ruin. Translated into their vernacular, this Proclamation was sent to the military authorities to be distributed among the soldiery in all parts of the country, whilst the words of it were telegraphed to the Lieutenant-Governor at Agra, with emphatic instructions to "disseminate it in every town, village, bazaar, and serai." "It is for the people as well as for the troops." It was yet hoped that it might bear the good fruit of a return to order and tranquillity.*

At the same time, it appeared to the Governor-General to be in the highest degree important to arm the military authorities with new powers both for the prompt reward of good and loyal soldiers, and the prompt punishment of mutineers. The first might be done by a simple order of the Government. The latter required the interposition of the Legislature. So an Act was passed to facilitate the trial and punishment of offences against the articles of war for the Native Army, by which commanding officers of Divisions, Brigades, and Stations were authorised to assemble general and other Courts-martial, and to proceed to carry sentence into effect without reference

May 16.

* It has been often said that this Proclamation ought to have been issued at an earlier period. Colonel Birch advised the Governor-General, when the excited state of the Native soldiery first became apparent, to issue a proclamation of this kind, and Lord Canning afterwards frankly expressed his regret that he had not taken the advice of his military secretary. On turning back to page 177, the reader will perceive that a similar delay in issuing a sedative proclamation occurred in 1806, after the mutiny in the Madras Army. It is, however, very doubtful whether such manifestoes have any effect upon the Native mind, when once any popular belief of the intentions of Government has taken fast hold of it. I have already observed, that those who entertain a conviction that the Government have formed a deliberate design to trick the people out of their religion, are not likely to find any difficulty in believing that the issue of a lying proclamation is a part of the plot.

to Head-Quarters. In such an emergency as had then arisen, Centralisation could not stand its ground. So whilst increased power was thus given to commanding officers to overawe rebellion, increased power to encourage loyalty and good conduct was delegated to them and to certain high civil and political functionaries. They were empowered to promote Native soldiers and non-commissioned officers on the scene of their good deeds, and to confer upon them the "Order of Merit,"* "in order that the reward for eminent gallantry, loyalty, and good conduct might be prompt, and might be conferred on the soldier in the sight of his comrades." But no proclamations and general orders—nothing that the Legislature could decree or Executive Government publish—no words that men could utter, in that extremity, could avail to arrest the fury of the storm that was bursting over their head. It was too late for words, for none would hear. It was left to the English only to strike.

General Order, May 19.

Thus Canning did all that could be done, and waited for the issue—waited, fearfully and hopefully, for tidings of new disasters in one direction, and of coming succours from another. As he thus waited and watched, and pondered new details of the great rising, which every day added something to the clearness and completeness of the story, there were times when he felt in his inmost heart that there were no better resources than a few brave hearts and a few strong heads upon whose courage and coolness he could rely. It must be said, sorrowfully, and I would fain not say it, but History admits of no such reservations, that Lord Canning felt bitterly that, with some few honourable exceptions, the English officers at the Presidency were not giving him the moral support which, in such a crisis, would have been so grateful and refreshing to him, and for which truly he had a right to look. It is impossible to describe his mortification. Where he had hoped to see strength he saw only weakness. Men whom he thought to see sustaining and encouraging others by their own resolute bearing and their cheerfulness of speech, went about from place to place infecting their friends with their own despondency, and chilling the hearts which they should have warmed by

* Authority in this latter respect was confined to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and the North-Western Provinces, and to the Chief Commissioners in Oudh and the Panjáb.

their example. Such a spectacle as this was even more painful than the tidings of disaster and death which came huddling in from all parts of the country. No one knew better, and no one more freely acknowledged that the men of whom he complained were "brave enough with swords by their sides." They would have faced death for their country's good with the courage of heroes and the constancy of martyrs; but strong as they would have been in deeds, they were weak in words, and they went about as prophets of evil, giving free utterance to all their gloomiest anticipations, and thus spreading through all the strata of English society at the capital the alarm which a more confident demeanour in the upper places might have arrested. And so strong was Lord Canning's sense of the evil that had arisen, and that might arise from this want of reserve, that he wrote specially to the authorities in England to receive with caution the stories that were likely to be sent home in the private letters which the mail was about to carry from Calcutta.*

Harris and Elphinstone.

But the shame with which he beheld the failure of some of his countrymen at Calcutta, made him turn with the greater pride and the greater confidence towards those who were nobly seconding his efforts from a distance. The Governors of Madras and of Bombay, Harris and Elphinstone, had responded to his appeals, and without any selfish thoughts of their own wants, any heed of dangerous contingencies at home, were sending him the succours he so much needed; and he was profoundly grateful for their aid. The promptitude with which they responded to the call for help was something almost marvellous. The electric telegraph might fail us in some parts, but in others it did its work well. On the 18th of May, Canning knew that the Madras Fusiliers were already embarking, and had thanked Harris by telegraph for his "great expedition." On the 22nd he learnt that the first instalment of the troops from Persia had reached Bombay, and that a steamer had already started for Calcutta with a wing of the 64th Queen's. The fire-ship was doing its work as well as the lightning-post.

* The author evidently refers here to the officers in high authority whom he does not mention in the succeeding pages. It seems to me altogether too sweeping an assertion. The "gloomy anticipations" were the result of want of confidence in the foresight and energy of the Government.—G. B. M.

The Lawrences.

But although there was to the Governor-General great consolation in the thought that he would lack no material or moral support that Harris and Elphinstone could give him, it was, in a conjuncture so imminent, to the individual characters of men actually confronting the dangers which threatened the empire, that he looked with the most eager anxiety. And there were no points to which he turned his eyes with a keener interest than to those two great provinces, the history of the annexation of which I have written in the early part of this book, the great provinces of the Panjáb and of Oudh. It was from Oudh that so large a part of the Bengal Army had been drawn; it was in Oudh, the last of our acquisitions, that the animosities and resentments born of the great revolution we had accomplished were festering most freshly; it was in Oudh that we had to contend with the reviving energies of a dynasty scarcely yet extinct, and an aristocracy in the first throes of its humiliation. All this Lord Canning distinctly saw. It was in the Panjáb that all external dangers were to be encountered; it was from the Panjáb that Dehli was to be recovered. There was consolation in the thought that only a few months before the good offices of Dost Muhammad had been purchased in the manner most likely to secure his neutrality. But death might, any day, remove the old Amir from the scene; there would, in such a case, be internal convulsions, out of which would probably arise an invasion of our frontier by one contending faction or another: and, therefore, much as troops were needed below, a still greater danger might be incurred by weakening the force on the frontier. In other parts of the country there might be merely a military mutiny; but in Oudh and the Panjáb the Government was threatened with the horrors of a popular rebellion, and the embarrassments of a foreign war.

But if there were much trouble and anxiety in these thoughts, they had their attendant consolations. Let what might happen in Oudh and the Panjáb, the Lawrences were there. The Governor-General had abundant faith in them both; faith in their courage, their constancy, their capacity for command; but most of all, he trusted them because they coveted responsibility. It is only from an innate sense of strength that this desire proceeds; only in obedience to the unerring voice of Nature that strong men press forward to grasp what weak men shrink from possessing. Knowing this, when, on the 16th of May,

Henry Lawrence telegraphed to the Governor-General, "Give me plenary military power in Oudh; I will not use it unnecessarily," not a moment was lost in flashing back the encouraging answer, "You have full military powers. The Governor-General will support you in everything that you think necessary."

With John Lawrence it was less easy to communicate. A short time before the outbreak of the mutiny, the Chief Commissioner of the Panjáb, whose health had been sorely tried by incessant work, had proposed to the Governor-General to occupy a part of the approaching hot weather in a tour through Kashmir, but Lord Canning, on political grounds, had discouraged the proposal; for Guláb Singh lay dying, and it was believed that such a visit to the dominions of the Maharajah would be associated in men's minds with some ulterior project of their annexation. John Lawrence, therefore, had happily not gone to Kashmir. When the news of the outbreak at Mírath reached the Panjáb, he was, on his way to the Marri Hills, at Ráwalpindí; and thence, having first telegraphed to them both, he wrote, on the 13th of May, to the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief. Nine days afterwards Lord Canning received the missive which had been addressed to him, together with a copy of the Commissioner's earnest appeal to Anson to be up and doing. In the former, Lawrence urged upon the Governor-General the expediency of raising for immediate service a large body of Sikh Irregulars. "Our European force in India," he wrote, "is so small, that it may gradually be worn down and destroyed. It is of the highest importance, therefore, that we should increase our Irregular troops. . . . In the event of an emergency, I should like to have power to raise as far as one thousand Horse; I will not do this unless absolutely necessary." Five days before this letter had reached Calcutta, Lord Canning had telegraphed his consent to the proposal, adding, "You will be supported in every measure that you think necessary for safety." He was unstinting in his expressions of confidence to those who deserved it.

Those were days when the best men stood upon the least ceremony, and if they had a suggestion to offer to Government, offered it with the full assurance that they were doing their duty, and would not be charged with presumption. So General Hearsey, when he learnt the news that had come from Mírath

and Dehli, had written to the Military Secretary to urge the Government to call for troops from Madras and Bombay and the Persian Gulf, and to arrest the China expedition. So Henry Lawrence had telegraphed to the Governor-General to get every available European "from China, Ceylon, and elsewhere, also all the Gurkhas from the Hills." So Patrick Grant, the Commander-in-Chief at Madras, had telegraphed to him to send a swift steamer at once to intercept the China expedition; and John Lawrence had sent a message setting forth these and other means of meeting the crisis. For all these suggestions Lord Canning was grateful; but it was with much satisfaction, perhaps with some pride, that when the detailed plans of the Chief Commissioner of the Panjáb were laid before him, he sent back a message, through the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, saying, "Every precaution which your message suggests has been taken long ago."

Then, every effort made, and every precaution taken to save alike the Christian people and the great empire committed to his care, there was an interval of reflection; and with a feeling of solemn wonder, Canning dwelt upon the causes of all this tremendous excitement, and asked himself whether it could be only a military mutiny that he was combating. It did not seem as though the origin of such a commotion were to be found only in the unaided instincts of the soldiery. It might be that the activities then discernible were purely military activities, but it did not follow that external influences had not been at work to produce the state of mind that was developing such terrible results. There were even then some dawning apprehensions that, with the best possible intentions, grave mistakes might have been committed in past years, and that the tree of benignant error was now bearing bitter fruit. He thought over all that had been done by his great predecessor: the countries that had been annexed to the British Empire, the powerful interests that had suffered so grievously by our domination, the manifold encroachments, material and moral, of English muscle and English mind. Not at first did he perceive all that was afterwards made clear to him, for at the time of which I am now writing there were many breaks in the great chain of postal and telegraphic communication, and it was not easy to form a right conception of the actual situation of affairs in the Upper Provinces. But he soon ceased to speak of the mutiny, and called it a "rebellion"—a "revolt." Early in the

year, he had felt disposed to attach some importance to the idea of political causes, but, as he wrote on more than one occasion, "not much." Now his uncertainty upon this point began to disappear, and he wrote to the Indian Minister at home that he had not a doubt that the rebellion had been fomented "by Brahmans on religious pretences, and by others for political motives."* He saw, indeed, that for some years preceding the outbreak the English in India, moved by the strong faith that was in them, had striven, with a somewhat intemperate zeal, to assimilate all things to their own modes of thought, and that the Old Man had risen against the New, and resented his ceaseless innovations. To this pass had the self-assertions of the national character brought us. The Indian Empire was in flames. But, with a proud and noble confidence, Canning felt that this great national character which had raised the conflagration would, by God's blessing, ere long trample it out. Even those whose despondency had so pained him would, he knew, when called upon to act, belie the weakness of their words by the bravery of their deeds. Looking into the future, he saw the fire spreading; he saw the heathen raging furiously against him, and a great army, trained in our own schools of warfare, turning against us the lessons we had taught them, stimulated by the Priesthood, encouraged, perhaps aided, by the nobles of the land, and with all the resources of the country at their command; but seeing this, he saw also something beyond, grand in the distance; he saw the manhood of England going out to meet it.

* Writing also to the Chairman of the Court of Directors (Mr. Ross Mangles), Lord Canning said: "I have learnt unmistakably that the apprehension of some attempt upon Caste is growing stronger, or at least is more sedulously spread. Mr. Colvin has found the same; and a proclamation, which goes to you herewith, has been issued with a view of arresting the evil. But political animosity goes for something among the causes, though it is not, in my opinion, a chief one."—May 19, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

APPENDIX.

THE NÁNÁ SÁHIB AND AZIM-ÚLLAH KHAN.

[The visit of the Náná Sáhib to Lakhnao, in April, 1857, referred to at page 124, is thus described by Mr. Martin Gubbins in his history of the Mutinies in Oudh :]

"I must here mention a visit which was made to Lakhnao, in April, by the Náná of Bithur, whose subsequent treachery and atrocities have given him a pre-eminence in infamy. He came over on pretence of seeing the sights at Lakhnao, accompanied by his younger brother and a numerous retinue, bringing letters of introduction from a former Judge of Kánhpúr to Captain Hayes and to myself. He visited me, and his manner was arrogant and presuming. To make a show of dignity and importance, he brought six or seven followers with him into the room, for whom chairs were demanded. One of these men was his notorious agent, Azim-úllah. His younger brother was more pleasing in appearance and demeanour. The Náná was introduced by me to Sir Henry Lawrence, who received him kindly, and ordered the authorities of the city to show him every attention. I subsequently met him parading through Lakhnao with a retinue more than usually large. He had promised before leaving Lakhnao to make his final call on the Wednesday. On the Monday, we received a message from him that urgent business required his attendance at Kánhpúr, and he left Lakhnao accordingly. At the time his conduct excited little attention ; but it was otherwise when affairs had assumed the aspect which they did at Kánhpúr by the 20th of May. His demeanour at Lakhnao and sudden departure to Kánhpúr appeared exceedingly suspicious, and I brought it to the notice of Sir Henry Lawrence. The Chief Commissioner concurred in my suspicions, and by his authority I addressed Sir Hugh Wheeler, cautioning him against the Náná, and stating Sir Henry's belief that he was not to be depended on. The warning was unhappily disregarded, and, on the 22nd of May, a message was received stating that 'two guns and three hundred men, cavalry and infantry, furnished by the Maharajah of Bithur, came in this morning.'"

Many readers will smile at the statement that the Náná Sáhib was in correspondence with Russia, and received an answer to his overtures. But it is by no means improbable that Azim-úllah Khan entered into communication with some Russian officers, responsible or irresponsible, and it is certain that at the time of the Crimean War nothing could have better served the interests of Russia than a revolt in India. That Azim-úllah visited the Crimea we know upon the best possible authority—that of Mr. Russell, who has given, in his "Diary in India," an interesting account of his meeting with the Náná's agent in the trenches before Sebastopol.

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